

Sam Moffett

STUDY COPY

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JOY FOR AN ANXIOUS AGE



A STUDY GUIDE ON PHILIPPIANS
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Preface

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS is a Christian answer to anxiety. It is God's message through Paul to the church in an anxious age. Its theme is joy.

The question is, How could such great joy spring from such troubled times? The apostle was in prison. The world was going to ruin all about him. His favorite church, the congregation in Philippi, was in danger of division. Yet with the serenest confidence he wrote: "I am glad and rejoice. . . . Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me" (Phil. 2: 17-18). Why? What was there for him to be joyful about?

It should be worth a little time for us in our own age of anxiety to search this beautiful letter for the answer. We may then be rewarded with the discovery of two of the rarest secrets of the Christian life: How to be happy in an unhappy world and how to find unity in the midst of division.

The search should also give us an unparalleled picture of the inner, private life and thought of the greatest Christian who ever lived, for this is the most personal and most affectionate of all Paul's letters.

This study guide is divided into seven chapters. The first is introductory, outlining the background of the letter. The other six deal in succession with the major divisions of the letter. Each chapter contains study helps and an additional section for those with the will and the time for more intensive study.

S. H. M. and E. F. M.

THE AUTHORS

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This Protestant seminary is now the largest one in all Asia. The present enrollment is over 250, and more than one thousand of its graduates are serving the church in Korea.

TROUBLED TIMES

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS was written from Rome probably about A.D. 62, only thirty years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and half-way through the reign of the Emperor Nero.

The nineteen hundred years that have passed since then have changed the world in almost everything but its anxieties. Today's man may conquer space, but he still wrestles as unsuccessfully as the Romans and the Philippians with the harder problems of war and poverty and unhappiness and the ultimate meaning of life.

The Anxious World of the First Century

Like ours, the age of the apostle was an age of war. Rome was the strongest power on earth, but it was discovering to its surprise that it takes more than an army to keep the world at peace. At the edges of its strength, on the far borders, there was always war. What Viet Nam is to the world today, the British Isles and Armenia were to Rome while Paul was writing to Philippi. He was writing to a city that knew war at first hand, a city of soldiers and their families. Philippi had been chosen by the Emperor as a home for veterans of Rome's wars. There were men still living there who had fought against Anthony and Cleopatra. It is not surprising, therefore, to note how often he uses martial language in the letter.

Like ours also that age was an age of uneasy extremes of wealth and poverty. The Emperor Nero could spend the equivalent of \$175,000 on Egyptian roses for just one banquet, yet one out of every three or four persons in Rome was a slave. As Rome's wealth increased, its virtue seemed to disappear. The cities decayed. Women were warned to stay off the streets of Rome at night. Every pleasure and every vice was available. Philippi, as a Roman colony, had privileged status and had become a little Rome with all the trappings and temptations of Roman baths and theaters and Dionysian revels. (Samuel Dill, *Roman Society: From Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 32; D. A. Hays, *Paul and His Epistles*, p. 410.) Note how Paul warns the church there against the enticements of luxury, the "god of the belly" (Phil. 3: 19), and encourages the Philippians in the right use of money (ch. 4: 14-18).

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C. 157.)
Like ours it was an age of rapid social change. Philippi saw the fading of "the glory that was Greece." It had been founded in northern Greece (Macedonia) by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Now it had passed into the hands of Rome, but though the language of the city was Latin the country people still spoke Greek. The West of that day was being Romanized, as the world of today is being Westernized. There were many who bemoaned the changing of the times, but not Paul. At Philippi he wasted no time lamenting the passing of the old, but used the new Roman ways to the advantage of the gospel. (Acts, ch. 16.)

Rome itself was changing from Republic to Empire, and the city of Philippi had figured prominently in the change, for it was on the plains around the city that one of the decisive battles of history took place. There, about one hundred years before the coming of Paul, Augustus, the first emperor and the nephew of Julius Caesar, defeated the last Republican, Brutus, and Rome moved from democracy to dictatorship. Its age of rugged individualism came to an end. Emperors shook off the authority of the Senate and ruled like Oriental despots. By the time Paul wrote this letter they were even beginning to be worshiped like Oriental gods. (Dill, p. 617.) When Paul reminded the Philippians that there is a "name which is above every name," and that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:9-11), he was calling them to a confession that would clash head on with emperor worship and in a year or two would provoke the first of the great Roman persecutions.

But above all, like ours, that age was an age when life too easily lost its meaning and man too easily gave up hope. The frantic vices of the Empire were but a vain search for happiness when real hope of happiness had died, a kind of Roman existentialism.

The best philosopher of the age was Seneca. He was a Roman millionaire who could lie on a purple couch under golden ceilings and murmur in strange despair that life is living death, "a fatal gift of which the best that can be said is that the torture is short" (Dill, p. 14).

In the same city, Rome, was a Jewish prisoner in chains. The sad and suave philosopher and the fiery little Jew probably never met. The social contacts of a prisoner in Rome were limited. But when Paul wrote to Philippi, out of that prison cell came a trumpet call of Christian joy that is the best answer ever written to Seneca's unhappy gospel of universal pessimism.

The Happy Prisoner

No one seriously doubts that Paul was the author of this letter. About a hundred years ago it was fashionable for a time, particularly in Germany, to attack the genuineness of the letter on the ground that it is too gentle and kind to be a letter of the thundering Paul. Modern scholarship, however, has discredited this line of criticism. As one recent commentator puts it, "This is a bit like saying that the Churchill who delivered warlike speeches about

Hitler could not have written friendly letters to Roosevelt. . . . If this letter was not written by Paul, nothing was." (Carroll E. Simcox, *They Met at Philippi*, p. 21. [For a discussion of the rise and fall of the critics' attack, see M. R. Vincent, *Philippians* [The International Critical Commentary], pp. xxv ff.]

There is not quite the same degree of certainty about where Paul was when he wrote the letter. It was either Rome or Ephesus, probably Rome. (The general situation described could fit either city. Even the reference to the "praetorian guard" (ch. 1: 13) does not rule out the possibility of Ephesus.) But the weight of tradition, and the tone of Paul's references to his imprisonment and to the church in the city where he is imprisoned, make Rome the much more probable choice. The date, therefore, is about A.D. 62, ten years later than if it were written from Ephesus. (See Ernest F. Scott, "Philippians," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11, pp. 5-7.)

What the letter says is much more important than where and when it was written. It tells how a Christian, even in jail, can be happier than the wisest and richest philosopher in the greatest city on earth. Compare Seneca's "life is a fatal gift," with Paul's "I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content" (ch. 4: 11). Moreover, there was something deeper than contentment to Paul's happiness. He was a man who knew the exquisite joy of vision—a vision that once had called him "over to Macedonia" to Philippi, and a vision that now even through prison bars showed him the whole world as Christ's. (Ch. 2: 10-11.)

Mission

Philippi and the Christian Mission

It may have been the Philippian church's strategic position in Paul's world vision of Christian mission that gave it a special place in his heart and made this letter the warmest and most affectionate of all his letters to the churches. (Ch. 1: 7-9.) Paul loved Philippi as his first church in Europe. But more than that—for the geographical distinction did not mean as much then as it does now—Philippi marked an important step forward in the Christian march on Rome. Paul had already preached to Jews and Greeks. At Philippi, which had special Roman status as a colony of Roman citizens, he was reaching the edge of Rome itself, and Rome was the gateway to the whole world. It is in this global sense that Paul can describe the church in Philippi as "the beginning of the gospel" (ch. 4: 15).

Philippi was indeed strategically located for mission in the world of that day. The main arterial highway, the Egnatian Way, between Asia and Rome, was guarded at the edge of Europe by the forts of Philippi. So when Christianity entered Western history from Asia, it came with Paul through Philippi.

One of the most overworked myths of our time is that Western imperialism invaded the Orient through the Christian missionary movement. *Philippians* reminds us that this is all wrong. The first missionary went the other way.

The gospel did not "invade" Asia; it came from Asia, and its first beachhead in the European West, so far as we have any record, was at Philippi. Furthermore, in the Communist myth, the missionary is the aggressor. In Philippi he is in prison; and he is in prison again when he writes to the Philippians. In the Communist myth the missionary buys his converts with capitalist gold. In Philippi, again, it is just the other way around. It is the converts who are paying the missionary. The whole letter to Philippians is really just a thank-you note for their gifts. In the Communist myth, the missionary is an imperialist; in Philippi, the missionary is of a conquered race, and it is his converts who are the imperialists. Curiously enough, even the little church there is born with an imperialist tinge in the house of Lydia, a seller of the imperial purple. As for the missionary, he was just a laborer, a maker of tents.

Look back then and imagine the apostle, the pioneer to Europe, as he steps ashore at the port of Neapolis. The account is in Acts, ch. 16, where the narrative suddenly switches to the first person, indicating that Luke had joined the party there. He was eager, perhaps, to show Paul his hometown, for some think that Luke was born in Philippi.

So the little missionary party hurries over the coastal ridge to the city nine miles away, with its Greek town stretching along the hills and the Roman colony spreading across the plain. Perhaps they passed a grove of trees where the river ran outside the city and where a small group of Jews met on the Sabbath for prayer. There a few days later the Lord opened Lydia's heart. "It was in green pastures and beside still waters that St. Paul won his first European convert," observes James Hastings (in the *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 2, p. 215). And she was a woman. The "man of Macedonia" turned out to be a woman!

The Women in Philippi

The church in Philippi is unique in the New Testament for the place occupied there by women. It is clear witness to the fact that from the beginning the Christian faith moved toward the emancipation of women. The first believer in Philippi was a businesswoman. (Acts 16: 14.) The first open demonstration of Christian power there was the deliverance of a slave girl. (Vs. 16-18.) Ten years later, when Paul writes to the church, two of the only three leaders in the church mentioned by name are women (Phil. 4: 2), and he specifically notes the help that women had been to him in this the beginning of the Christian mission to the West (ch. 4: 3).

The Letter

For anyone who likes neat outlines constructed around a central, unifying theme, Philippians is going to be a disappointment. It is not an essay, like Romans or Hebrews. It is pure letter—warm, personal, repetitious, and like some sermons, twice as long as it starts out to be. Paul finishes his letter in ch. 2 (as we divide it). He begins ch. 3 with "Finally," and then goes on for

two more chapters. He writes seven verses in ch. 4, says "Finally" again, and goes on for twice as many more verses. Even after he has said "Amen" (ch. 4: 20), he cannot stop but adds a three-verse postscript.

Analytically, the letter divides into six main sections:

1. *Greetings and prayer* for the Philippians (ch. 1: 1-11).
2. Then the subject shifts to *Paul's situation in Rome* (ch. 1: 12-26).
3. His thought turns back to Philippi with an *appeal for unity* (chs. 1: 27 to 2: 18).
4. Again in Rome, he tells of *his future plans* (ch. 2: 19-30).
5. To Philippi once more, *warnings and appeals* (chs. 3: 1 to 4: 8).
6. *Thanks for the gift* from Philippi (ch. 4: 9-23).

But we will divide the letter a little differently and outline it as follows:

PHILIPPIANS: AN OUTLINE

- I. The Joys of Partnership (ch. 1: 1-11)
 - A. Paul and His Partner: A Greeting (vs. 1-2)
 1. The partnership is for mission (v. 1)
 2. The partnership is in Christ (vs. 1-2)
 - B. Paul and His Partners: A Prayer (vs. 3-11)
 1. They were his joy in the past (vs. 3-5)
 2. They are his beloved friends now (vs. 7-8)
 3. He is confident of their future (vs. 6, 9-11)
- II. The Joys of Adversity (ch. 1: 12-30)
 - A. The Advantages of Opposition (vs. 12-18)
 1. Imprisonment can help the gospel (vs. 12-14)
 2. Even church division has its uses (vs. 15-18)
 - B. The Hope of Deliverance (vs. 19-26)
 1. Our hope is in Christ (vs. 19-21)
 2. Our deliverance is for others (vs. 22-26)
 - C. The Christians' Part in Victory (ch. 1: 27-30)
 1. Be moral (v. 27)
 2. Be united (v. 27)
 3. Be brave (v. 28)
 4. Accept suffering (v. 29)
 5. Be involved (v. 30)
- III. The Joys of Unity (ch. 2: 1-11)
 - A. The Call to Unity: Be One (vs. 1-2)
 - B. The Prerequisite of Unity: Be Humble (vs. 3-4)
 - C. The Secret of Unity: Be in Christ (vs. 5-11)
 1. The power is in Christ (v. 5)
 2. The example is Christ (vs. 6-11)

On Partnership in 1st

On Joy in Times of Trial

On the Unity of the

- IV. The Pursuit of Unity (ch. 2: 12-30)
 - A. The Responsibility of Unity (vs. 12-13)
 - B. The Marks of Responsibility (vs. 14-18)
 - C. Leadership for Unity (vs. 19-30)
 - 1. Timothy, the missionary partner (vs. 19-24)
 - 2. Epaphroditus, the local leader (vs. 25-30)

- V. Warnings Against Three Threats to Unity (ch. 3: 1-21)
 - A. Against Self-righteous Legalists (vs. 1-11)
 - 1. Rites are nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 1-3)
 - 2. Race is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 4-7)
 - 3. Our righteousness is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 8-11)
 - B. Against Self-satisfied Saints (vs. 12-16)
 - C. Against Self-serving Sinners (vs. 17-21)

- VI. Final Appeals for Joy and Unity in Christ (ch. 4: 1-23)
 - A. Appeal for Unity (vs. 1-3)
 - B. Appeal for Joy (vs. 4-7)
 - C. Concluding Remarks (vs. 8-23)
 - 1. The Christian's mind (vs. 8-9)
 - 2. The Christian's resources (vs. 10-23)

STUDY HELPS

1. Read together Acts, ch. 16.
What three segments of society were represented by the first converts in Philippi? What segments of society is your church reaching? Does it miss any? Why?
2. How did Paul and Timothy make use of Roman influences in Philippi for the advantage of the gospel? Applying this lesson to ourselves, list ways in which we might take advantage of social change in our own society for the sake of our revolutionary faith.
3. Review the reasons for Paul's great interest in Philippi. What can we learn from him in terms of strategic planning? Where are the most important centers for Christian mission in today's world?
4. List the reasons why our age is called "An Anxious Age." As you begin to read Philippians, jot down any Christian answers to these specific anxieties that you may find.
5. Locate and begin to familiarize yourselves with some of the following commentaries and study books (perhaps available in the church library):

William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (The Daily Study Bible).

Archibald M. Hunter, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* (The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 22).
J. H. Michael, *Philippians* (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary).
Paul S. Rees, *The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians*.
Ernest F. Scott, "Philippians," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11.
Carroll E. Simcox, *They Met at Philippi*.

And some of the following Bible versions: The Revised Standard Version, J. B. Phillips' *The New Testament in Modern English*, *The New English Bible*, *The Moffatt Translation*, K. Taylor's *Living Letters*.

6. If you are interested in further information on the world of Paul's day, see Samuel Dill, *Roman Society: From Nero to Marcus Aurelius*; or S. Angus, *The Environment of Early Christianity*; or the Pelican paperback, R. H. Barrows, *The Romans* (esp. pp. 10-11, 59-69, 89-92, 179-184).

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. You will need a good concordance, or at least a Bible with a concordance included. Pick out the five most important Bible passages on joy, which you can find outside of Philippians.
2. If you have a topical concordance, see what you can find in the Bible about anxiety, fretfulness, worry.
3. Who are some of the important women mentioned by name in the New Testament church? What was the place of women in the life of the community of believers? Read Luke 1: 5-38; ch. 2: 36-38; ch. 10: 38-42; John 12: 3-8; Acts 9: 36-41; I Tim. 2: 9-14; II Tim. 3: 6-8; I Peter 3: 1-6. How do you reconcile what these passages say about women in the church with Paul's statement in I Cor. 14: 34?
4. Make your own outline of Phil., ch. 1.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT STUDY PERIOD

1. Read Philippians through at one sitting. If possible, read all four chapters every day for thirty days. Study in depth Phil. 1: 1-11.
2. Read the next chapter in the Study Guide.

THANK GOD FOR PARTNERS

Philippians 1:1-11

AS THE APOSTLE PAUL begins his last letter to his friends in the church at Philippi, three things soon became evident. He is very much concerned about something. He is absolutely committed to someone. And he is quite happy about almost everything. Such a mixture of concern, commitment, and joy is a remarkably fine combination of mental and spiritual attitudes for any Christian in any age.

At first, in his opening words of greeting, it is the note of commitment that dominates, but indirectly woven in is also something of the concern and the joy.

Philippians 1:1-2—Slaves, Saints, and a Partner

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ . . . , to all the saints in Christ . . . at Philippi . . . : Grace . . . and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Paul and his partner: A greeting

The first step.

1:2

(NOTE: The text here and below will be condensed for quick reference and rapid sequence. Compare it with the full text in your Bible.)

vs 1
1. The first strong word in the letter is "servant." Literally it means "slave," as if the first thing Paul wants to make dramatically clear is his *absolute commitment to Jesus Christ*. His letter is many things: a hymn of joy, a thank-you note, a love letter to a church, a lesson in missionary strategy, and an apostolic plea for Christian unity. But Paul begins where joy and thanksgiving and love and mission and unity must all begin. He begins with Jesus Christ.

vs 3-4
Before he has so much as finished the first words of greeting, he has named the name of Christ three times and triple-stitched into the opening fabric of the epistle a monogram, as it were—a sign of the underlying secret of all that he wants to say to Philippi about unity and joy. So the letter opens with this rapid repetition of "the name," reminding the Philippians of three fundamental facts of the Christian life. J. H. Michael summarizes them thus: "Our relation to Christ ['servant of Christ']; our state in Christ ['saints in Christ'];

and our blessings *from* Christ [*grace and peace from . . . the Lord Jesus Christ*].” Slavery, sainthood, and blessings may be a singularly unattractive blend of ideas to most modern readers, but everything that Paul is about to say to the Philippians is rooted in a right understanding of those three words:

The *slavery* of which Paul speaks is not the abject, crawling thing that human masters make of it. Paul's only “slavery” is absolute obedience to and total possession by Jesus Christ, his Lord and God. It is complete selflessness and utter loyalty. This is the slavery that makes men free. In the Old Testament it brought men to their feet before kings as “servants of God,” and prophets. “The Christian man,” said Luther, “is most free lord of all, and servant to none; the Christian man is most dutiful servant of all and subject to everyone.”

Remember what I said yesterday in the preaching service in Toronto - slave.

The *sainthood* (literally, “holiness”) of which Paul speaks is not the stained-glass window kind. “Saint” is the ordinary New Testament word for Christian. It means “holy” but not “holier than thou.” It is a little more like an honorary degree than an earned one, in that it does not imply a perfection achieved, but a position bestowed and a responsibility to be kept. That position is “in Christ,” which is Paul's key phrase in the description of what it means to be a Christian. Its meaning will become more clear as it recurs throughout this letter. Here he calls the Philippians “saints” not because he thinks they are without fault—he will soon be rebuking them for some of their shortcomings—but because when they are “in Christ,” Christ's holiness begins to be theirs.

The *blessings* are *grace and peace*. Here Paul makes a beautiful new Christian greeting out of the common Greek salutation, “Grace,” and the old Hebrew greeting, “Peace.” But more important, he sums up in those two short words the joy and power of a new faith that breaks down the barriers between Jew and Greek. *Grace* is not the languid, rather effete, word that we make of it today. Basically, it is the undeserved favor that God shows to man. It is God's “active love,” as P. T. Forsyth puts it. There is power in it: God's power for man's weakness. And there is joy in it: God's joy for man's sorrow. The result is *peace*, which is all from God, for no man has joy and peace and power from himself.

2. Not so obvious in these opening verses, but very much on the apostle's mind, as later parts of the letter will show, is his *concern for the unity of the church*. The first hint of it, perhaps, is a faint stress on the word “all.” Paul has had word of divisions among the Christians at Philippi, but he plays no favorites. He reminds them that they are all one in Christ, and greets “all the saints in Christ . . . at Philippi.”

The theme of unity is introduced in another and particularly graceful way by Paul's first three words: “Paul and Timothy. . .” It was Paul's letter, not Timothy's, but with these first words the old pioneer lifts up his junior missionary colleague into full partnership and commends him to the church. He

guards against any opening wedge of division between the older and younger generations. Paul is Christ's slave, and Timothy's partner.

Philippians 1: 3-11—Completing the Partnership

Paul and His Partners

v 3) I thank . . . God in all my remembrance of you, . . . /making my
v 4) prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel
vs 6) from the first day until now. . . I am sure that he who began
a good work in you will bring it to completion. . . I hold you
in my heart. . . I yearn for you all. . . And it is my prayer that
your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and . . .
discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and . . .
be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits
of righteousness which come through . . . Christ.

Pran
The Next Step
2 new -

In the words of greeting (vs. 1-2), Paul made clear his relation to Timothy his partner, and to Christ his Lord. Now, beginning with v. 3, he makes equally clear his relationship to the Christians at Philippi. They are not just converts and followers. As surely as Timothy, they too are his partners in mission, and the thought moves him to words that are lyric with joy and affection. The past, the present, and the future all move across his mind as he prays for them.

1. *The past fills him with joy* (vs. 3-5). "I thank my God . . . with joy, . . . for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now," he writes. The King James Version has "fellowship in the gospel," but the Revised Standard Version is better, for what moves Paul to joy is the memory of "their common participation with him in spreading the gospel" (*Expositor's Greek Testament*). For a missionary like Paul there is no greater joy than when the convert becomes a partner.

My father, who was a pioneer in Korea, singled out as his moment of most intense joy on the mission field the day he commissioned the first Korean to volunteer for missionary service. Sixteen years earlier, entering North Korea, he had faced a mob in the streets of Pyengyang. Out of the back alleys they poured to stone the "foreign devil." One of the men who tried to kill him that day was a young tough named Yi Kui-Poong. Sixteen years later, in 1907, father found himself facing Yi Kui-Poong again. This time it was at the first meeting of the first presbytery of the new Korean Presbyterian Church, and father, as the moderator, was about to commission its first missionary—Yi Kui-Poong, who had been converted, trained, and was now ordained for mission on remote Quelpart Island. We call this a "new day in mission," as the younger churches join with us in full partnership in the work of reaching the whole inhabited earth for Christ. But it is not new. It is a pattern as old as Philippi.

What was Philippi's "partnership in the gospel"? Paul refers to it again at the end of his letter. "When I left Macedonia," he says (ch. 4: 15-16), "no

Philippian Partnership:
1. How long it is
2. How Paul to Christ.

church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica you sent me help." The Philippian church was not only the first in Europe, historically and geographically, insofar as we have record; it was also the first to move from the receiving to the giving stage. It supported Paul financially.

2. *The present is full of love* (vs. 7-9). We would expect a man in prison to be praying to get out, but not Paul. His prayer is filled not with the anxieties of the moment but with its blessings. Where we would pray, "Help, Lord, I have problems," Paul prays, "Thank you, Lord, I have love." An undercurrent of deep affection between Paul and the Philippian Christians ripples its way all through the letter. The words almost trip over each other, as twice in as many verses Paul tells the Philippians how he loves them: "I hold you in my heart" (v. 7); "How I yearn for you" (v. 8). It would all be shallow and excessively sentimental did not the apostle reveal the deeps from which his love wells up: the grace of God (v. 7), and the love of Christ (v. 8). Partnership in grace sweetens the partnership of work with love. And, as another apostle put it, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (I John 4: 18). Love is one of the best Christian answers to anxiety.

Love
Lepers.

3. *The future is sure* (vs. 6, 10-11). The future holds no more anxiety for Paul than the past or the present. "I am sure that he who began a good work in you," he writes, "will bring it to completion." But just how realistic was Paul's confidence? Where is the church in Philippi today? Ten feet underground! I have seen pictures of the plain of Philippi: tumbling wall, a heap of stones where archaeologists have scratched away the dust of centuries, a column standing bare and broken against a line of snowy hills. That is all. There is no church left.

Confidence

We spoke of Communist myths, in the first chapter of this guide; there are Christian myths as well. One of them is that churches cannot be destroyed; that however fierce their persecutors may be, God's promise stands firm, "The gates of hell shall not prevail." That promise is true, but it must not be interpreted naïvely and unbiblically. It is a misunderstanding both of God's promise and of Paul's confidence to imagine that any church anywhere is indestructible. God's promise is to the church, the whole church, not to individual churches, and like the sign of Noah's rainbow, though it stands as assurance against total disaster, it is no guarantee of local immunity. There have been many floods since Noah's day, and many churches have been wiped out since our Lord made his promise to his church. It happened to Philippi, and it can happen again.

False confidence.

11. Myra
11. J. J. J.

Was the apostle's confidence, then, nothing but wishful thinking? Not at all. His confidence is in the One who began the good work, in Jesus Christ, not in those in whom the work is done. He loves the Philippians, but he knows better than to put his hope for the future in any man. The future belongs to God. The church in Philippi may be gone, but the church of God has circled the world.

There is, however, a hint in history that even the Philippian church did not disappear without first playing its part in mission and in victory. Origen, writing about one hundred and fifty years after Paul's death, says that the Clement mentioned in Phil. 4: 3 is Clement of Rome. This may well not be so, for Clement was a common name and we have only Origen's word for it five generations after the fact. But I like to think that Origen may be right, and that the little church in Philippi, firstfruits of Paul's mission to Europe, took its partnership with him in that mission so seriously that when at last the great apostle laid down his life a martyr for the gospel in Rome, his beloved Philippians sent Clement from their small number to take his place. Clement, a missionary, "whose name is in the book of life," was writer of the earliest Christian document known outside the New Testament, Clement's *Letter to the Corinthians*. What a fitting answer to Paul's confidence that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion," and to his prayer "that your love may abound . . . filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through . . . Christ, to the glory . . . of God."

Note the last words. At the end, as at the beginning, Paul's confidence for the future rests not in his partners but in his Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is Paul's definition of a saint? (See Rom. 1: 7; I Cor. 1: 2; Eph. 4: 12; II Thess. 1: 10.) How does that compare to the popular use of the word today?
2. What three "unities" do you find in the first two verses?
3. What is the difference between "concern" and "anxiety"?
4. Barclay points out ten kinds of joy that are described in Philippians: the joy of Christian prayer, the joy that Jesus Christ is preached, etc. Begin to spot the reference and make your own list, as our study continues.
5. How often does Paul repeat the words "you all" in this section? What does this suggest?
6. In what sense will God bring to completion his good work in us, not only as a body of believers but also as individuals?
7. As Paul turns from song to supplication in v. 9, what kind of love is he referring to? What does the word "abound" mean? What is the implication in this prayer that their love may abound *more and more*? See Rom. 5: 5.
8. What is the significance in Paul's prayer that their love may also be rich in knowledge and all discernment? Note the balance between love and

enlightenment. Is there a difference between love and sentimentalism? How, in Matt. 9: 27-31, for example, did a natural and good reaction become the enemy of the best?

9. What are the fruits of righteousness? (See Gal. 5: 22-23.) See if you can, by contrast, name some of the fruits of self-righteousness.
10. Look up information on "partnership in mission" and today's changing missionary patterns.

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. Meaning depends on grammatical structure as well as on vocabulary. Note the importance of the connectives in this passage. Pick out these connectives and study the meaning and flow of thought in the passage as revealed by them; e.g., the "and" in v. 1; "to," v. 1; "with," v. 1; "inasmuch," in v. 7 (KJV); "that," v. 10. What do the connectives tell us about the difference between "approve what is excellent" in Phil. 1: 10 and the same phrase in Rom. 2: 17 f.?
2. There are two references to the "day of Christ" in this section. What does Paul mean by the phrase? See I Thess. 3: 12-13; Matt. 24: 29 ff.; I Cor. 15: 24-25; Rev. 11: 15; John 6: 38 ff.
3. For a good ecclesiastical debate, investigate why Presbyterians derive comfort from the reference to bishops (plural) in Phil. 1: 1. See also Titus 1: 5-7, and Bishop Lightfoot's commentary, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, on this verse, pp. 193 f.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 1: 12-30.
2. Read Acts, chs. 21 to 28.
3. Read Chapter 3 in the Study Guide.

1 To
A The first missionaries (1-2)
B The new church (3-11)

Chapter 3 II

THE JOYS OF ADVERSITY

Philippians 1:12-30

THE FIRST PARAGRAPHS of Paul's letter have been full of normal joy in work to do, and the friends and partners with whom to do it. But Paul's situation was not normal as the Philippians knew very well. In fact, they were so concerned about him that they had sent one of their church members, Epaphroditus, to see what could be done about his desperate position.

4:18

2. But Paul turns the tables on them. Epaphroditus had come to comfort *him*; now he sends him back with this letter to comfort *them*. (Phil. 2: 25-30.) It seems that they are far more anxious than he is. He is in prison, but he is delightfully happy. He uses the word "joy" or "rejoice" over and over again—thirteen times in this one short letter.

1. Some may have thought him more delirious than happy. Anyone can rejoice in friendship and love and a chance to work; it is quite another thing to rejoice in adversity. How can he be serious? He says first, for example (in vs. 15-18), that he rejoices about the situation he faces in Rome. But he is under lock and key, and outside his cell in the city of Rome the church has split in two with anxious, rival evangelists preaching only to cause Paul more trouble. "So I rejoice," he says. It seems absurd. (1:11)

1:11
I may
in prison
or split

3. Second (in vs. 19-26), he rejoices at the prospect of deliverance from prison. This would make more sense, except that the odds were already turning ominously against him. It is impossible to know exactly the date when Paul wrote this passage, but it was probably about the time of the death of Burrhus, commander of the Praetorian Guard. Burrhus was the last *good* commander of the guard under Nero. He may have been responsible for Paul's rather lenient treatment up to that time. But when Burrhus died, a tiger took his place, the hated Tigellinus, debaucher of the emperor's own sisters and the worst of Nero's creatures. So with Burrhus dead or about to die, Paul's best chances of freedom were already gone. Yet he wrote, "I shall rejoice." (1:9)

Joy under such circumstances was madness. But Paul was not "under the circumstances," he was "in Christ"; and when life closes in, as Paul now explains to the Philippians, the difference between despair and hope is Christ. Perhaps, as he writes, his mind goes back ten years, and he remembers that there was a prison in Philippi once too. They had tried to keep a missionary

there, a missionary who refused to act like a prisoner, who refused to recognize defeat, who sang songs in the night. And after the hymns, and after the earthquake, it was the prison-keeper, not the prisoner, who tried to commit suicide. And it was the prisoner, not the prison-keeper, who opened the doors—the doors to eternal life.

Philippians 1: 12-18—Profiting from Opposition

I want you to know . . . that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known . . . to all . . . that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made . . . much more bold to speak the word of God. . . . Some indeed preach Christ from envy . . . , not sincerely . . . thinking to afflict me . . . , but others from good will . . . out of love. . . . What then? . . . Whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and . . . I rejoice.

Kierkegaard remarks in *Works of Love*: "For practical purposes, it is at the hopeless moment that we require the hopeful man. . . . Exactly where hope ceases to be reasonable, it begins to be useful." (Quoted in "Philippians," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11, p. 35.) That almost describes Paul in prison, but not quite. Kierkegaard is a bit too much of an irrationalist. Not Paul. There is nothing unreasonable about his joy. His joy was Christ.

1. *He rejoices in imprisonment because of Christ* (vs. 12-14). Why? Because his arrest, which was supposed to be a setback to the cause, instead has suddenly focused attention on the faith and all at once the name of Christ is being heard everywhere in Rome. Christianity thrives on opposition. "The blood of the martyrs," said Tertullian centuries ago, "is the seed of the church," and it is still true today as the Communists begrudgingly admit. "Religion is like a nail," complained the Russian, Lunacharski. "The harder you hit it, the deeper you drive it into the wood."

2. Unfortunately not all the opposition was coming from outside the church. Yet *Paul can rejoice even in church division because of Christ* (vs. 15-18). It may come as a shock to find the apostle in this passage virtually condoning separatism and rejoicing in the splintering of the sects. The truth, of course, is that it was not the division that made him glad. The secret of his joy was his supreme confidence in his Lord whose name, when preached even in faction and church partisanship, speaks with such compelling power that it can convert and save.

This passage was a comfort to John Calvin during the distressing divisions of the Reformation. No one worked harder than he to heal those divisions, but he failed. Refusing to be discouraged, however, he took heart from Paul's example at Rome and wrote in his commentary on these verses, "Hearing that that impure dog, Carolus, was scattering the seeds of pure doctrine, [we, like

Paul] gave thanks to God because he had made use of that most profligate and worthless villain for his glory." There is a little too much gritting of the teeth at the opposition, perhaps in the old Reformer, but at least he had found the secret of Christian joy even in the midst of division.

Philippians 1: 19-26—Alive or Dead—Christ's!

Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of . . . Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, . . . and . . . now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. . . . My desire is to depart and be with Christ. . . . But to remain . . . is more necessary on your account. . . . [So] I shall remain . . . , for your progress and joy . . . , that in me you may . . . glory in Christ.

Paul's third reason for joy is his hope of deliverance. This would seem to require less explanation than his joy in imprisonment and his joy in division, but it is not quite what it seems. True, he speaks of coming to Philippi again (v. 26), but he is too much of a realist not to know that his only release from prison may be the deliverance of death. He is, however, magnificently unconcerned. The three great passions of his life have utterly obliterated all concern for himself. These are his love for Christ, his love for others, and his love for his work.

1. *Christ comes first.* He is the key to all joy in adversity. In one of the greatest verses in the whole Bible, Paul puts it thus: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (v. 21). There is a modern echo of that apostolic affirmation in the words of a Korean martyr shot by the Communists. Unshakable to the end, he said simply to his murderers, "Alive or dead I am Jesus Christ's man." When a man is "in Christ," nothing in life or in death can change the relationship or shake the position. Then life loses its anxieties and death all its terrors. The man who is not prepared to die, someone has remarked, is not prepared to live.

2. Paul's second passion in life was *his love for others*. He is so busy caring for them he has no time to worry about himself. Verse 20 suggests that a premonition of death has come to him, but immediately he is more concerned about what this may mean to his friends than about what it will mean to him. So with exquisite grace he prepares them for any eventuality. He would be glad to die, he assures the Philippians, for death would only bring him nearer to the Lord he loves. Only his love and his feeling of continued responsibility for them makes life preferable to death. Whatever lies ahead of him, therefore, he will accept with joy. The future frightens only the man or woman who lives for himself.

3. The third passion of Paul's life is *his work*. So great was his joy in it (v. 22) that not even the frustrating interruptions of arrest and imprisonment

could annoy him for long. He could move no farther than his chain, but he was forever planning ahead, mapping out new missionary journeys. The next one, he says (v. 26), will bring him through Philippi. But like any good general, Paul has alternative plans. What if he is not released? In that case, says Paul, in the final paragraph of this first chapter, the battle is up to you Philippians.

Philippians 1: 27-30—Getting Into the Fight

Only let your . . . life be worthy of . . . Christ . . . whether I come . . . or [not]. . . Stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith . . . , and not frightened . . . by your opponents. This is a clear omen . . . of their destruction. . . . For . . . you should not only believe in him [Christ] but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which . . . [is] mine.

Paul has just told the Philippians that the hope of the future is in Christ. It is no real help, however, to anxious, troubled people to throw a Christian truth at them, and tell them that if they will only believe it all will be well. Christian victory is not won by platitudes, and Christian truth must be *put* to work or it *won't* work. So Paul does not let truth wither away into platitudes for lack of application. Having revealed the secret of victory, Christ, he goes right on to point out that the Christian must play his own part in that victory.

He is writing to a soldier's town and he puts it in vivid military language. He tells the troops to shape up, close ranks, be men, endure hardship, and engage the enemy. The stress is on five important Christian duties:

1. *Right conduct* ("let your manner of life be worthy"). ^{vs. 27} There is no room in the Christian life for orthodoxy without ethics. More than one church has been split by Christians trying to excuse themselves for ethical lapses by their theological orthodoxy. Paul would not tolerate such a travesty of the faith. He says as clearly as James that "faith without works is dead" (KJV). The progress of thought in all his letters runs directly from doctrine to conduct. 1:27

2. *Unity* ("one spirit . . . one mind"). ^{vs. 27} This is the first direct plea for unity in the letter, but it will become the central theme in the next chapter, and it was implicit in this chapter from the first "and" of the first verse. Paul had conceded in vs. 15-18 above that factionalism cannot destroy the gospel. Now he begins to qualify that concession. It is no less true, he reminds the Philippians, among whom some signs of discord were appearing, that Christian unity is imperative for Christian victory. Division cannot defeat, but it can prevent victory.

3. *Courage* ("not frightened . . . by your opponents"). ^{v. 28} The courage spoken of here is probably courage of conviction, not physical courage. Open per- 178

secution had not yet begun. But Philippi was an idol-worshipping town, and the opponents referred to were in all probability idol worshippers demanding compromises from the "one-God" Christians. "Stand firm for your convictions," Paul tells his people. Ethics without orthodoxy is as wrong as orthodoxy without ethics.

4. *Suffering*. Paul makes no empty promises of easy, bargain-rate salvation. As it took Christ's suffering for us to win us our salvation, so it should come as no surprise if we are called upon to suffer for him. With characteristic resilience Paul looks on this kind of suffering as a gift, not a burden. "It has been granted to you . . . [to] suffer." (V. 29.)

5. *Involvement* ("engaged in . . . conflict"). Twice in this paragraph the apostle indicates that the Christian life is not withdrawal from the world but involvement in it. In the plea for right conduct in v. 27, the verb literally means "be worthy citizens," or in other words, "take your right place in civic affairs." That is the positive side. Christians are to stand up and be counted in community action for justice and order and right. There is also a negative side. Like Paul, we may be drawn into conflict and suffering. This is not to be shunned as unchristian. It is part of the engagement, the involvement. The long line of Christian involvement in history runs straight from Philippi to Selma.

Phillips paraphrases the last verse of the chapter thus: "It is now your turn to take part in that battle you once saw me engaged in." Paul knows he is nearing the end of his fight, and like an old soldier turning over the command, he writes this last letter to his partners, the Philippians. It is part of the joy of struggle, and part of our hope of victory, that there are those who will carry on where we leave off.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature of the opposition encountered by Paul and what use does he make of it in developing his message in ch. 1?
2. Look up some other Bible references that teach us that a Christian lives above the circumstances. (For example, John 16: 16-20; James 1: 2. Find others.)
3. If you were writing a paper on Phil. 1: 15-18, what title would you use?
4. What does Paul mean when he says in ch. 1: 19, "For I know that . . . this will turn out for my deliverance"? What does the word "this" refer to? What kind of deliverance is he expecting?
5. Paul seems to have a conviction that the prayers of the saints are one of the two factors in his deliverance. What other evidence is there in Scrip-

ture for the importance that God places on believers' prayer for the achievement of divine purpose?

6. There are prisons of the mind as well as of the body. To what fears, jealousies, and opposition in present-day America does Paul speak?
7. What kind of practical involvement are Christians called into today?

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. How did Paul happen to be in prison in the first place? (Refer back to Acts, chs. 21 to 28.)
2. What was the Praetorian Guard? (Phil. 1: 13.) See also ch. 4: 22. What does it indicate about the spread of the gospel?
3. Write your own paraphrase of ch. 1: 19-30.
4. Make a study of what the Bible means by "suffering for his sake" (v. 29). See Matt. 16: 24; II Tim. 2: 12; II Cor. 4:17; Heb. 11: 25; I Peter 4: 1; etc.
5. The vital interrelationship of orthodoxy and ethics in Paul's teaching is emphatic. Separating them and emphasizing either the one or the other has resulted in a number of dangerous trends in the church through the centuries and even in our time. Find out what some of these are.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 2: 1-11.
2. Read Chapter 4 in the Study Guide.

Chapter 4

I Thank God for Partners. (1:1-11)

A. The missionary as partner - ecclesiastical: Jew and Gentile (1-2)

B. The new Christians as partners - world mission (3-11)

II In Times of Trouble, Rejoice. (1:12-30)

A. Pain has its advantages B. Even division has its uses.

A MIND FOR JOY

III. But Christian unity is a greater joy than Church Division.

Philippians 2: 1-11

PAUL NOW COMES to the heart of his letter. His call to battle, to involvement, and to mission in the closing paragraphs of the first chapter leads him inevitably to a call to unity; for mission demands unity, and unity proceeds out of mission.

Bishop Azariah, the saintly evangelist of South India and the first Indian ever to become an Anglican bishop, tells of an interview he had with Dr. Ambedkar, leader of India's untouchable millions, the *harijans*, the outcastes. It was back in 1935. Dr. Ambedkar was about to forsake Hinduism. "Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease," he had said. Bishop Azariah hoped he would bring his millions into the Christian faith. "Your people, deeply religious, cannot live without a religion," said the bishop. "It is not enough to give up Hinduism. They must have something else." He offered them Christianity. Dr. Ambedkar replied: "I am well aware of all that the Christian church has done for the outcastes, but we Harijans are one community all over India, and our strength is in our unity. Can you in the Christian church offer us any unity comparable to that?" And the bishop was silent.

Since Christian mission so often demands unity for evangelistic effectiveness, it is no accident that Paul the missionary writes to Philippi pleading for unity. But he begins with a more personal plea. Your unity is my joy, he writes, so "fill up my cup of happiness" (*The New English Bible*), "complete my joy" (RSV), and be one. A mind for joy is one mind in Christ.

Philippians 2: 1-2--The Call to Unity *Be One*

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, . . . complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love.

Just what it was in Philippi that called for this appeal we can only conjecture. Perhaps it was a personal quarrel between two members of the church, as the reference in Phil. 4: 2 seems to indicate. It was not doctrinal division as in Galatia, or moral weakness as in Corinth, but rather, some form of jealousy or personal ambition. To check such lack of concord before it

breaks into open schism, Paul writes this moving appeal for harmony. He bases his appeal on two great cornerstones. (3) → And I'll add a fourth - as Paul does. (2) from appeal to the church

1. *Union in Christ*. Again that important phrase appears, *in Christ*. "If there is any encouragement in Christ . . ." He begins with Christ and bases his whole appeal for unity on the actual union of the believer with the body of Christ. "Union with Christ," Paul is saying, "demands unity in Christian life." Appeals to church unity that begin anywhere else but with "union in Christ" are rootless and baseless. vs. 1

2. *Love*. "If . . . any incentive of love . . ." The first appeal is objective, our union in Christ; the second is warmly subjective. It is an appeal to that sympathetic love of the brethren which is characteristic of real Christians. Love is the best word to describe the Christian God. He is love. Love is the best word to describe the Christian religion; it is love of God. And love is the best word to describe the Christian way of life; it is love of our fellowmen. Love
to Spirit
Humanity

3. *The Holy Spirit* - "participation" (4) *Common humanity* - "union in Christ".
Unity in the church, then, is built on these two cornerstones: our union in Christ, and our love for one another. If either of these is missing, we cannot say we love God and we are not rightly in the church at all. (I John 4: 16-20.) The rest of v. 2 only repeats the lesson in other words. "Participation in the Spirit" is another description of "union in Christ"; and "affection" and "sympathy" are aspects of love. These expressions of love are the foundations of unity in the church.

But what about doctrine? Is that not also basic to union? Yes, but it is dangerous to try to read too much into any one passage. Paul is not talking about church reunion after a schism. He is, rather, forestalling a division. He is talking to a single congregation, undivided by heresies, and the basis of unity in such a group is precisely as he describes it: oneness in Christ, and love toward one another. Given these two basics, it is for Christians to "live together in harmony [and] live together in love, as though [they] had only one mind and one spirit between [them]" (Phil. 2: 2, Phillips).

That is easier said than done. How are Christians actually to work out such happy harmony? Having told the Philippians what to do, Paul now proceeds to tell them how to do it.

Philippians 2: 3-4--The Prerequisite of Unity

[1] Be United]

Do nothing from selfishness . . . , but in humility count others better than yourselves. . . . Look not only to . . . [your] own interests, but also to the interests of others. → Be Humble

This is the second step in Paul's appeal. First, be united. Second, if you want to be united, be humble. This is what the church should be like, a com-

munity where nothing is done in selfishness or conceit, but where in humility each thinks more of others than he does of himself. "A marvellous community," exclaims one commentator, Lenski, "in which no one is looked down upon, but every one looked up to."

But how often humility, which is the indispensable ingredient in Christian living, becomes the missing ingredient in the way we actually live. "When I look back upon my own religious experience," says Andrew Murray in his little book *Humility*, "or round upon the Church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at the thought of how *little* humility is sought after as the distinguishing feature of discipleship of Jesus. . . . Alas, how much proof there is that humility is not esteemed the cardinal virtue, the only root from which the graces grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus. . . . Meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief marks by which those who follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God are known."

I wonder how much of the tension between churches, and between Christians, or between Christians and non-Christians, is caused by this lack of humility in Christians. I was badly jolted one day when a Korean said to me: "You Americans are always so proud. And even if you weren't, I wouldn't believe it, because if I had all you had I'd be proud myself." If that is the handicap we work against, how much harder we must strive to be humble.

Again, easier said than done. We cannot go around muttering fiercely to ourselves: "Be humble. Be humble." It does not work. If humility is so necessary, if it really is the mark of discipleship and the secret of unity in the church, then what in the world is the secret of humility, for that is the secret we need.

Paul once found himself in just such a cycle of frustration. He described it to the Romans: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7: 15, 18, 24). But the answer comes at once, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7: 25). The answer is always Christ. The secret of humility is Christ. "Be united," Paul urges. "How?" we ask. "Be humble," he replies. "How?" "Be in Christ," says Paul as he now begins to unfold the final secret of unity and joy.

Philippians 2: 5-11—The Secret of Unity (3) Be . . .

Have this mind . . . in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. . . . He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name

which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This great passage is the glory of the letter. It is a description of the humility that *can* be ours when we are in Christ, who is both the power and the example for our pursuit of that elusive virtue.

1. *The power* (v. 5). The usual interpretation of this difficult verse is to take it as an appeal to the example of Jesus Christ. That is the sense of the King James Version, and that sense is not at all foreign to this passage. The example is there, as we shall see. But the example is not enough. It has been pointed out by a theologian in India that the example of Christ is not an ordinary Pauline pattern of thought. M. Hollis writes, "[Paul] does not argue that Christians can do something because Jesus has done it, in the sense that what man has done man can do." He is more radical and dynamic than that. What Paul says over and over again is that Christians can do what was before impossible because they are "in Christ," new men in Christ. "The humanly impossible [humility, unity] is possible because they are in Christ." ("A Further Note on Philippians 2: 5," in *The Indian Journal of Theology*, VII, p. 4.)

The New English Bible translates the verse, "Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus." In other words, let your mutual relationships be governed not by your natural minds, your old nature, but by the new nature, the mind which is yours *in Christ*. The power is in him. It becomes ours when we are in him.

2. *The example* (vs. 6-11). This is one of the most profound Christological passages in the whole Bible, but Paul uses it not to teach theology, so much, as to teach a very practical truth about Christian living in a very practical situation. It is a lofty passage used to teach a lowly truth, humility.

It may also be the very first Christian hymn. The style stands out sharply from the casual manner of the rest of the letter. Every phrase is measured, every word exact and balanced. To catch the flavor of the original, read Milton, not the Bible's English prose.

"That glorious Form, that Light insufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heavn's high Council-Table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksome House of mortal Clay."

"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity."

It is more than a hymn, however, it is a three-point sermon on the person

and work of Jesus Christ. First Paul sweeps us back to the beginning of time for an exceedingly rare glimpse of Christ before he came to earth, the pre-existent Christ. Next he focuses on the hinge of history, the incarnation. Finally he moves on majestically to the end of time and Christ's exaltation. Why all this just to teach humility?

a. *The preexistent Christ* (v. 6). Paul begins with Christ before he came to earth because it is this that gives *ethical* meaning to the example. It is precisely because Christ *was* God that his becoming a man and a servant had meaning. There is no humility in a man being a man, or a servant being a servant. There is even less humility in a man becoming God as some modern heresies about Christ would have it.

Christ was God. That is where Paul begins. "He [Christ] was in the form of God," he writes. It is only in the English that his language is ambiguous. The Greeks had two separate words for form. One refers to outer, changing shapes, as when "a cloud takes the *form* of a mountain" (*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11, p. 48). That is not the one used here. Paul uses the other word, *morphē*, which is the kind of form that expresses what the object really is. If Christ has the form of God in this sense, then God is what he really is. Phillips translates it, "He who had always been God by nature."

b. *The incarnate Christ* (vs. 7-8). He who had always been God . . . *became man*. The Lord of Glory took "the form of a servant"—once again the word "form," though Paul uses the weaker word here, the word for "outer shape." This in no way implies a "reverse unitarianism," that is, that Jesus was not really a man but was just God masquerading like a man. [There are some branches of the Coptic Church, which do in this way virtually deny the real humanity of Christ, but they have become isolated, introverted, superstitious, and selfish—an object lesson on what will happen to any church that forgets that God really did become a servant. It simply ceases to be relevant.] The deity of Christ makes the humiliation *ethical*; the incarnation makes it *relevant*. This is why, in 1956, a committee of the World Presbyterian Alliance, meeting in Prague to choose a theme for the 18th General Council in São Paulo that would be as relevant to Christians on one side of the Curtain as the other, finally picked out this passage. They linked it with Isa., ch. 53, and John, ch. 13, and chose as the theme for the Quadrennium, "The Servant Lord and His Servant People."

What does it take to become a "servant people"? Will giving up our luxuries do it? When the Communists rolled over us in Peking, knowing what propaganda use they made of our "capitalist affluence," we tried to simplify our living standards. One of the most warmhearted missionaries I have ever known outdid us all. He got rid of his furniture, his rugs; he ate the simplest of food, wore his oldest clothes. When the first Communist soldier came into the house, Hal welcomed him into the bare rooms. "We are here to serve, not to exploit," he tried to indicate. The little soldier smiled and looked at his shoes. That was all; he just looked at his shoes. And Hal finally looked down

4. For a more thorough study of the meaning of the key phrase, "in Christ," read James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ*, especially Ch. IV, pp. 147-203.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 2: 12-30.
2. Read Chapter 5 in the Study Guide.

church is often persecuted, men are usually careful not to criticize the name of Jesus. The Communists try to use the name rather than attack it. Their propagandists labor to capture Jesus for the revolution. "He was a carpenter's son," they say, "a workingman, the first martyr of the revolution, crucified by the imperialists." There is still such power in the name that even the enemy tries to borrow something of its power.

And we who bear the name, how much of its power do we carry?

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the three great causes of discord and disunity suggested by Phil. 2: 3-4?
2. People who are most in earnest about their beliefs are sometimes most prone to factionalism. Why? Does Paul, therefore, call for reduced conviction and commitment as an aid to unity? Name four or five considerations or appeals set down by Paul for the prevention of disharmony.
3. The early Christians had a one-sentence creed. See if you can construct a brief creed of your own from ch. 2: 5-11.
4. What is humility? Hitler said it was no virtue at all but a weakening vice. How would you answer him?
5. Jesus is called the Servant Lord. What does the paradox mean? Why are both sides of the paradox important?
6. What does Christian service require of us?
7. What is the difference between Christ as power and Christ as example?

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. Make a study of specific examples of Christ's humility in the Gospels. (Matt. 11: 29; Luke 2: 4-7; v. 51; Matt. 13: 55; Luke 9: 58; Matt. 9: 10-11; ch. 20: 28; John 13: 5; and many others.)
2. Where is Christ's deity most clearly taught in the Bible? See, for example: Heb. 1: 3-6; Col. 2: 9; John 14: 9; Matt. 1: 23; John 1: 1; ch. 20: 28; I Tim. 3: 16. Find others.
3. Where is Christ's humanity most clearly taught? Begin with Matt. 13: 55; John 1: 14; Gal. 4: 4; I Tim. 2: 5.

Some Bible scholars suggest that the apostle must have caught his own mistake and hastily corrected it in the next verse. Having written "work out your own salvation," he stops, recovers himself, and quickly changes the subject of the verb. Not "you work," but "God works in you."

No, Paul means both. "You work" and "God works." The next chapter will make quite clear that Paul has lost none of his fire against the salvation-by-works heretics and that he has not abandoned free grace or salvation by faith. But neither has he abandoned an equally important doctrine, the doctrine of human responsibility. Paul does not try to resolve the paradox between man's free will and God's determining will. He teaches both, as if confident that parallel truths like parallel lines, though they may not be brought together on earth by finite minds, will nevertheless meet in the infinity of the life hereafter.

There is not as much of a paradox in these verses, however, as might be thought, if we read them in context. The subject is obedience and unity, not salvation. The "work" Paul is urging on the Philippians is simply the kind of obedience to God that comes from humility and leads to unity. In other words, obedience like Christ's. This was the whole point of the great hymn of Christ's example. And the "salvation" of which he speaks is not the goal of the work, not even its direct result—the direct result was death. Salvation is a reward, and in the case of man, as Paul makes very clear elsewhere, it is an unearned reward, a free gift (Eph. 2: 8-9).

The balance between "work out your own salvation" and "God is at work in you" has been put this way: "You work out what God works in." This puts the weight on the right side of the partnership, but the truth is deeper than that. Paul is not drawing up a legal contract, with footnotes spelling out just what part is God's work and what part is man's. His thought, rather, is of a spiritual union, a blending of wills. It is the other side of his favorite phrase, "in Christ." When we are "in Christ," then God is "in us." "For God is at work in you."

Why man with fear and trembling?

Surely, here is the place for a shout of joy. God is with us! Why does Paul speak instead so soberly of "fear and trembling"? The phrase conjures up memories of harsh Puritan preaching, of Jonathan Edwards and soul-shaking sermons like "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Actually it is only to the modern mind that the fear of God seems incompatible with joy; and Edwards' God is nearer to Paul's than the "sweet little old somebody up there" of today's pop theology. But in this case Paul is not speaking of God's anger. His reference is rather to God's cooperating presence. The fear of which the verse speaks, therefore, is not terror at God's anger, but that proper sense of awe which man must not lose as he stands before the presence of the Almighty.

*It is his
of common
on God*

There is a place in life for the right kind of fear. A man who goes into battle without proper fear will never make a good soldier. A man who comes

The Division now divides but there is unity is a greater
joy. a greater unity than Christ can divide & de-
A. Be One B. be united C. be in Christ
The 11th - the second half of the chapter a further point: be obedient
Not giving up your own law - but just being obedient - that
why has man missed the unity - it is just a being united to
I. Be 21 - the first for the unity - don't see the unity in
the text is - on verse 2:12-13.
(2) Impulse of unity - 2:14-15
(3) Leadership in unity - 2:14-30

THE PURSUIT OF UNITY

Philippians 2:12-30

THE GREAT HYMN has thundered to its close, and with v. 12 Paul abruptly comes back to Philippi. He leaves the future, with its vision of the Lord in cosmic triumph, and returns to the persistent problems of the present. There is still a little trouble in Philippi.

At once the apostle is all business. The lyric mood is over. Stern and affectionate by turn, he first lectures the Philippians like an Old Testament prophet, then chats with them like a friend.

Philippians 2:12-13—Responsibility for Unity

Therefore . . . as you have always obeyed, so now . . . in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you.

With his first word Paul indicates that though the mood has changed, he is still writing about the same subject, unity in the church. The hymn is over, but the "therefore" in v. 12 resumes the appeal to the example of Christ's humility which is the key to unity.

The stress is on the element of obedience in that example. As Christ was obedient (v. 8), so now you must be obedient (v. 12), he says. Then, as Christ's obedience brought exaltation, you may expect that your obedience will bring salvation. This puts the responsibility squarely where it belongs, on them. Do not depend on me any longer, he is saying; depend on yourselves. "Work out your own salvation." (See Joseph B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 116.)

But what a shocking phrase to find in a letter from Paul! If there is anything the Christian can *not* do in Paul's gospel of grace, it is work out his own salvation. To the Galatians, to the Romans, to all his churches, he has written time and again to warn against the fatal illusion that salvation can be earned. "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? . . . Did you receive the Spirit by works?" (Gal. 3:1-2.) How can he now calmly turn his back on everything for which he had fought so vigorously, and teach the Philippians work-righteousness?

gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. Christians are both to hold it fast and hold it out—the word Paul uses can mean either. There is unity in holding to the center, to Jesus Christ who is the Word of Life. But holding to the center will propel us to the ends of the earth, for unity is for mission and for giving the Word of Life to the whole world. *Evangelion - Word of Life*

4. *They are expendable.* The paragraph closes as we might by now expect of Paul with a familiar combination: a note of personal affection, a realistic look at his own desperate position, and a burst of improbable joy.

The apostle has been asking a good deal of the Philippians, lecturing at them like a preacher. Now he speaks to them as an old friend. It may be a lot to ask, he is saying, but do it; do it for me. I may not be with you much longer, and I can die happy if only I know that you are faithful. Once again the old warrior looks death in the face and is unafraid. He uses a figure of speech unfamiliar to us, but readily understood in a city like Philippi with all its pagan altars. The picture is of a cup of wine poured out upon the offering at the altar as a libation at a pagan sacrifice. The Philippians' faithfulness is their offering. Paul's death is only the cup of wine that crowns the sacrifice, and he offers his own blood as that wine, not at all appalled at the prospect. For he is expendable; it is their faithfulness that counts.

This is the final mark of Christian responsibility: to be expendable. We are Christ's expendables, says Paul, so let us all rejoice!

C. Philippians 2: 19-30—Leadership for Unity

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests. . . . But Timothy's worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me. . . . I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and . . . fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need. . . . He was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him. . . . So receive him in the Lord with all joy; and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete your service to me.

It has been suggested by some that Paul here comes to the main purpose of his letter. Disturbed by reports of disunity, he determines to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to mend the rifts in the Philippian church, and writes this letter to assure them of a proper reception. This does not quite ring true to the tone of the letter. Paul's confident hope that the Philippians themselves, by God's grace in them, will close ranks and "work out their own salvation" does not suggest that they are in urgent need of outside leadership.

before God without the proper fear will never make a good Christian. Christians who presume on the promise of God's presence to claim a first-name, hand-holding, buddy-buddy relationship with Deity do not really know in whose presence they stand. This is the God who answers by fire (I Kings 18: 24); the thunder of whose power no man can understand (Job 26: 14). He knows the secrets of the heart (Ps. 44: 21) and all things are naked and open before him (Heb. 4: 13). There can be no easy familiarity in such a presence, but vigilance, rather, and awe and reverential fear. Sir Edmund Hillary, conqueror of Everest, says that every minute he is on a mountain he is afraid, but now that he has learned to live with fear, it no longer paralyzes. It only keeps him keen and alert. In this kind of fear there is no dismay, but a fierce joy and a strange attraction that draws the climber back again and again to the mountains. So it is with the fear of God. There is no terror in it for the Christian but confidence and joy and a strange attraction that draws him with reverence into the very presence of God.

Philippians 2: 14-18--The Marks of Responsibility. *Four traits of obedient . . . people*

(1) Do all things without grumbling . . . , that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God . . . in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, (2) holding fast the word of life, so that . . . I may be proud. . . (3) Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice. . . . Be glad and rejoice with me.

Paul continues his lecture on Christian unity by outlining four further marks of obedient, responsible Christians.

1. *They get along with their fellow Christians.* Do not grumble, or argue, or question one another's motives, says Paul. These were the signs of disunity that tore apart the Children of Israel in the wilderness and delayed for so many years their entrance into the Promised Land. Petty personal differences and rivalries can tear a church apart as fast as theological differences. In fact, the latter is often used only as an excuse for a division that was actually caused by the former.

2. *They are an example to non-Christians.* A Korean proverb runs, "It takes only one fish to muddy a whole stream." For one person's lapse, a whole congregation can be blamed; for one congregation's disunity the whole church can be discredited. So "be blameless," says Paul, and "shine like stars in a dark world" (Moffatt's translation). But what kind of shining example is a divided church? "A world lying broken and half-dead on one side of the road," said Dr. Walter Horton, "will not be helped much by a church lying broken and half-dead on the other side."

3. *They hold the faith.* The "word of life" of which Paul speaks, is the

until he was tortured and killed. He belongs with Epaphroditus on Paul's honor roll. (Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, p. 517.)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is unity so important in Christian mission? Is it any less important in the church at home?
2. What are the principal causes of disunity in the American church? What are some signs of its unity? Is there a proper place for denominationalism?
3. One commentator finds five marks of the Christian in Phil. 2: 12-16. Make your own list from these verses.
4. What special traits in Paul's character do his remarks about Timothy and Epaphroditus reveal?
5. Where else do we find reference to Christians as lights in the world? What is the source of this light?
6. Verse 28 contains another of Paul's answers to anxiety. What is it?
7. What kind of obedience is Paul asking for in v. 12?

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. a. Look up Timothy's background: I Cor. 4: 14-17; Acts 16: 1-5; ch. 19: 22.
b. What do the following references tell us about Timothy? II Tim. 1: 5; I Tim. 5: 23; I Cor. 16: 10; I Tim. 4: 12; II Tim. 2: 22; ch. 1: 8; ch. 3: 10; I Tim. 1: 2; II Tim. 1: 2; Rom. 16: 21.
2. Make a study of other Biblical passages pointing to obedience as a necessary response to God's free gift of grace. Begin with Gen. 12: 1-4; Jer. 7: 23; I Sam. 15: 22-23; Acts 5: 29; Heb. 5: 9; Rom. 6: 16-18; and Heb. 11: 8.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 3: 1-21.
2. Read Chapter 6 in the Study Guide.
3. Read The Letter of Paul to the Galatians.

Nevertheless, leadership is important and Paul does indicate that he expects much of Timothy and Epaphroditus. His descriptions of the two men are an illuminating lesson on what the greatest leader the Christian mission has ever had looked for in his fellow workers when he was picking leaders.

1. *Timothy, the missionary partner* (vs. 19-24). Timothy is Paul's closest and most trusted associate. He calls him a son. In a very helpful study of Philippians, *The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians*, Paul Rees catches the spirit of Paul's description of Timothy in a quick, alliterative outline: He is *sympathetic*, "genuinely anxious for your welfare." He is *selfless*, "I have no one like him. . . . They all look after their own interests." He is *seasoned*, "You know his worth . . . as a son with a father he has served with me." The word for "worth" is used of tested metal.

Ultimately all three of the above characteristics are only aspects of the one indispensable condition for Christian leadership. It has already been described by Paul at the beginning of this chapter (ch. 2: 3). Moffatt translates it, "never acting for private ends." Timothy is anxious only for others, the one kind of anxiety permitted in the Christian. He is the model of the Christian leader because he is concerned for others, not himself; his thought is only for the cause of Christ, not his own interests; and he works *with* his partner, not alone.

2. *Epaphroditus, the local leader* (vs. 25-30). We might say, in terms of today's missionary partnership, that Timothy was the missionary and Epaphroditus the national worker. Timothy came from outside, though he was part Greek; whereas Epaphroditus belonged to the church of Philippi. He was probably one of its pastors and had come bringing a gift from the congregation to help Paul in prison. Like Timothy he has the marks of Christian leadership: *sympathy*, "distressed because you heard that he was ill"; *selflessness*, "risking his life to complete your service"; and *seasoning*, "fellow worker and fellow soldier."

It is no discredit to his missionary colleague, Timothy, that Paul singles out Epaphroditus for special mention. "Honor such men," he says. Too often the heroism of the national worker is unhonored and unsung. Everyone knows of the missionary martyrs of the Boxer rebellion. One hundred eighty-eight men, women, and children were killed and "there is no record of a single attempt at recantation or wavering of purpose," says the historian, Professor Latourette. But more than 1,900 Chinese Protestant Christians were killed by the Boxers. Theirs is the greater honor. They could so easily have escaped. When Pastor Meng, the first Chinese ordained by the North China Mission of the American Board (Congregational), heard that the missionaries were in danger, instead of fleeing for his life, he went straight to the city to help them. He insisted on keeping the preaching chapel open even when the Boxers closed in, ordering his oldest son to escape so that someone would be left to carry on the work, but staying himself at the post

We are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh. Though . . . if any . . . man thinks he has reason for confidence . . . , I have more: circumcised . . . , a Hebrew born of Hebrews; . . . a Pharisee, . . . a persecutor of the church, . . . under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. . . . I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God . . . ; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, . . . that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Just before the beginning of his mission to Europe and his first visit to Philippi some thirteen years earlier, Paul had fought and won one of the most decisive battles in church history. His defense of Christian liberty at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts, ch. 15) was a turning point in the whole course of Christian thought. His opponents were the Judaizers. It was only natural that among the early Christians many were unable to see how radically the coming of Christ had changed the entire pattern of man's relationship to God. Jewish themselves, and reared in Judaism, the foundation of their thinking was still the Mosaic law. It was inconceivable to them that one could become a Christian save on this foundation. The issue was simple. Must a man become a Jew before he can become a Christian? Yes, said the Judaizers, he must first submit to the Jewish initiatory rite of circumcision. No, said Paul. There is only one foundation, Jesus Christ, and any man is free to come to him directly, not through Moses. He appealed to the apostles in Jerusalem. And there, in a decision that changed the tide of history, the council stood solidly with Paul for liberty.

To have that victory questioned now at Philippi makes Paul's anger rise, and his language thickens. Bluntly, almost brutally, he slashes out at those who would divide the church and take it captive again into the bondage of the law. "Dogs," and flesh mutilators, he calls them, and zeroes in on their central error. The first and fatal mistake of legalists is a smothering concern for the nonessential. In the case of the Judaizers it took the form of obsessive concern with Jewish rites and race and legal righteousness. These, therefore, are what Paul attacks. What the Judaizers falsely insist are the essentials of the faith, he exposes as only the externals. What counts is Christ, he says.

1. *Rites* (vs. 2-3). Circumcision is nothing, he argues; Christ is everything. His appeal is from ritual circumcision to true circumcision. He echoes a truth that not even his Judaizing opponents can deny, for it comes from the Old Testament, namely, that genuine circumcision is more than a cutting of the flesh; it is a "circumcision of the heart" (Deut. 10: 16). The gospel does not begin with the body and its mutilation; it is of the spirit. We worship God in spirit, says Paul, and glory not in ceremonies but in Christ.

This is a letter about Joy

1. Joy in partnership. 1:1-11
2. Joy in time of trouble even in chch difficulty 1:12-26
3. But greater joy in Chr. 2:1-11. One; Humble, 7
4. Our part in Christian Unity. 2:12-30.

THREE THREATS TO UNITY

5. 3 Threats to the Unity

Philippians 3:1-21

THE THIRD CHAPTER of Philippians begins as though Paul is ready to sign and seal the letter and send it off with Epaphroditus. He cannot end, however, without a final summons to joy. "Finally," he writes, "rejoice in the Lord." It is not anxiety about his troubles but joy in Christ that has been the theme of the whole letter, so he mentions it now again at the end.

Then, suddenly and so abruptly that some scholars have questioned whether the next paragraphs belong in the original letter at all, Paul breaks out into a blazing attack on enemies that he fears could split and divide his beloved Philippians. The enemies are his old adversaries, the Judaizers, but before he has finished with them he has warned the church about two other dangers that could destroy its unity in Christ. The chapter divides itself into three warnings: (1) against legalism (vs. 1-11); (2) against perfectionism (vs. 12-16); and (3) against libertinism (vs. 17-21).

Any one of the three can destroy Christian unity, so this group of warnings is no real interruption of the train of thought in the letter. It is rather a continuation of Paul's plea for unity through humility. Each warning is a condemnation of some form of that self-righteous pride which is the very opposite of humility. Legalism is pride in keeping the law. Perfectionism is pride in oneself. Libertinism is pride in breaking the law.

There is, therefore, no sufficient reason to doubt that this section is an integral part of Paul's letter to Philippi. It reveals more of his personal life and inner spirit than any other single part of his writings. As for the abrupt transition, his style is always swift and mercurial. It would take only a chance word dropped about the Judaizers, or the passing thought of the defenselessness of the little church in Philippi, now that he can no longer protect it in person, to start his quick mind off in a new direction. At any rate, whatever the reason, he cannot bring himself to say farewell without these three final admonitions.

Philippians 3: 1-11—Self-righteous Legalists

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. . . . Look out for the dogs, . . . for the evil-workers . . . who mutilate the flesh. . . .

A.
vs 23

Spirit, he saw that the righteousness which means forgiveness—the righteousness for which he had worked so painfully—was not his to be worked out at all. It comes not by works but by faith. It is the free gift of God's love. Man is not saved by doing good but by simple trust in Christ, like the thief on the cross. Goodness is the result of salvation, but never the cause of it.

Paul closes his blistering attack on the legalists' counterfeit Christianity with a short and moving summary of what it really means to be a Christian. It means not to count on our own goodness but to accept by faith Christ and his true righteousness. And it means to receive more than his righteousness; it means also to receive his power and to share his sufferings. What an unusual combination! Power and suffering. Yet this is what it will mean to be a Christian. Do not expect the power without a share of the suffering. But also, do not be anxious about the suffering, for there will be the power to bear it. And the end is not death but joy, the joy of the resurrection.

Philippians 3: 12-16—Self-satisfied Saints

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. . . . One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to that which lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded.

Paul's condemnation of the legalistic self-righteousness of the Judaizers is withering and complete, but honesty compels him to add a sharp reminder to Christians. Self-righteousness is not limited to Pharisees. There is Christian self-righteousness as well, even among the "saints." It rests on the false assumption that since by faith Christ's righteousness is ours, nothing further can be required of us. "In him" we are already perfect and sinless.

Such a passive, self-satisfied forgery of the Christian faith is given short shrift by the apostle. He attacks it from within, as he did against the legalists, but much more gently and indirectly. He uses the simple device of describing his own Christian experience, and the comparison with smug Christian perfectionists becomes embarrassingly clear. Not even Paul the apostle dares to claim he has reached perfection.

Paul's strenuous, never satisfied, restless, reaching faith is as different from the backward-looking self-righteousness of pseudoperfectionism as a race is from a testimony meeting. The real saint, as Paul describes him, is more like an athlete than an angel. He has a race to be run and a future to be won. The past is gone, and is better forgotten than continually dredged up for past experience of grace with which to bolster Christian pride. The perfection of which Paul speaks never lies in the past. It is never quite achieved; it always lies ahead. The word means full maturity. The prize toward which he presses

2. *Race* (vs. 4-7). Jewishness is nothing, Paul continues; Christ is everything. The narrow concern of the Judaizers for rites and ceremonies was only a symptom of a more serious ill. Its deeper and fiercely dangerous root was racial pride. Paul's attack on this evil is devastating, for he strikes at it from within. An outsider's criticism they could dismiss as jealousy. But all that was so precious to them in their Jewishness, Paul already had and more. He ticks off his claims to pure membership like a Klansman adding up his 100-percent Americanism, then icily brushes it aside as dirt with the contempt it deserves.

His appeal is from racial Jewishness to true Jewishness, and from racial Israel to the true Israel. Perhaps the suggestion came from Luke, his traveling companion in Philippi, whose Gospel, as Ernest J. Tinley's *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible: Luke* points out, takes as its central theme the assertion that the "true Israel" is Christ. The man "in Christ" is more truly Jewish, therefore, than mere circumcision can ever make him. What makes a man a true Israelite? A primitive surgical rite? Proud and proper birth? Fanatic, narrow zeal? Pharisaic rectitude? I had all that and found it empty form, says Paul. The truth, the essence, the "incomparable worth" is Jesus Christ.

3. *Legal righteousness* (vs. 8-11). Human righteousness is nothing, Paul says; Christ is everything. His appeal is from the righteousness that comes from keeping the law, to true righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. It has been said that these verses contain the clearest statement of the doctrine of justification by faith in Scripture. It was Rom. 1: 17 that caught at Luther's heart and sparked the mighty Reformation, but the same truth is even more simply and clearly brought into focus here. In fact, Phil. 4: 9 is a one-sentence summary of the whole letter to the Romans.

The contrast is between work-righteousness and faith-righteousness. Luther, as a monk, knew only the former. "You must earn your salvation," his friends told him, repeating the error of the Judaizers. So the young professor would go home at night from his lectures and beat himself in his room until the blood ran. Then, fearing that mortification of the flesh might not be enough for salvation, he threw himself into works of mercy and went about doing good. A plague came to the town. Monks, students, and faculty scattered to safety and begged him to fly with them. Luther refused. "My place is with the sick and dying," he said. "I am afraid of death, but there are things worse than death." He was thinking of hell. Surely, he thought to himself, if I die doing good works and caring for the sick, even the All-Terrible God will grant me the sweet mercy of forgiveness. But he did not die, and not even in good works did he find a sense of forgiveness. He still suffered the torments of the damned.

Then, one day in May, he began to prepare some lectures on Paul's letters. "He who through faith is righteous shall live," he read in Romans, and all at once and so strongly that he believed it was the direct work of the Holy

It is on this note that the chapter ends. Paul has turned from warnings to promise, as if he fears that his stern injunctions against so many kinds of error might leave his friends confused and anxious. But there is no reason for the Christian to be anxious about sin. He has a Savior. There is no reason for him to be anxious about *anything*. His Savior is "master of everything that is" (v. 21, Phillips).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. List the reasons why Paul could be rightfully proud of his Jewish heritage. What were the dangers involved in it?
2. In the church today rites and ceremonies can be both a help and a hindrance to our understanding of Christian truth. Explain.
3. What is Christian maturity as Paul teaches it here? How does it differ from perfectionism?
4. When Christians reject legalism, what kind of Christian disciplines remain? What is "the law still in the gospel"? See how many of the Ten Commandments you can find repeated in the New Testament.
5. What is the distinction between Christian liberty and license? What does Paul mean by those whose "God is their belly" (KJV)?
6. What does Paul mean by "knowing Christ"? How does he amplify this in terms of profit and loss?
7. What does v. 17 tell us about Paul as a teacher? Why does he remind his Philippian friends that "our commonwealth is in heaven"? (v. 20).
8. What do we mean by Christian liberty today?
9. What does Paul mean by "glorying in shame"? Give evidences of this today.

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. Two years ago the Bible study was on Galatians. Review your study of legalism as presented in that letter. How does it compare with Phil. 3: 1-11?
2. Make a study of "righteousness" as taught in the Bible. What is the righteousness we are to seek? (See, for example, Rom. 10: 1-4; Luke 18: 9-14; Isa. 45: 24; Phil. 3: 6-8; Matt. 5: 6; Eph. 4: 22-24; Gal. 2: 20-21; ch. 3: 21; Rom. 3: 20-24; ch. 9: 30-32; Titus 3: 5; Gal. 3: 6; I Cor. 1: 30; Rom. 4: 13. Using a concordance, continue your study.)

is that complete Christianity that is always just beyond the grasp until Christ, who has already made us his own (v. 12), calls us up at last to be with him (v. 14).

Philippians 3: 17-21—Self-serving Sinners

Join in imitating me, . . . for many . . . live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him . . . to subject all things to himself.

If there is anything worse than a self-righteous Jew or a self-righteous Christian, it is a self-righteous sinner. There are more such than might be imagined—inverted Pharisees whose delight in damning the pietists for pride in being good pushes them into the opposite trap, pride in being bad. “Glorying in shame,” Paul calls it (v. 19), and it is the worst kind of self-righteousness. The Pharisee praying, “God, I thank thee, that I am not . . . as this publican” (Luke 18: 11, KJV), is the classic example of self-righteousness. But how much worse, someone has suggested, is a publican praying, “Lord, I thank thee that I am not as this Pharisee.”

Self-righteous legalism is a hardening of the Christian arteries, a rigidity that destroys freedom, and it is wrong. But just as wrong is the kind of perpetual Christian adolescence that mistakes its first taste of liberty for the abolition of law, and defines freedom as permission to sin. It is not the legalist's *righteousness* that is wrong; it is his *self-righteousness*. Jesus himself warned the disciples, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5: 20).

So Paul reminds self-indulgent Christians, “whose god is their belly,” who have turned the liberty of the gospel into license, that though there is no salvation in the law, there is still law in the gospel. “We are a colony of heaven,” he says (in Moffatt's splendid translation of Phil. 3: 20), and does more than contrast thereby the earth-mindedness of the libertine with the higher ideals of the Christian. To Philippi, a colony of Rome with all its pride in Roman law, the phrase would come as a reminder that heaven has its disciplines as well as its privileges. Romans were free by law; yet Romans were under law. So Christians are free by grace, but under discipline. If, in a secular state, liberty has its responsibilities, how much more in “a colony of heaven.”

Note the contrasts by which Paul sets off Christians (vs. 20-21) from willful sinners (vs. 18-19). *Their* God is their belly; *ours* is a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their minds are in the dirt; ours are in heaven. Their glory is shame; ours is the glory of Christ's resurrection power. Their end is destruction; we look with hope to the end of time, for Christ shall come again.

FINAL APPEALS

Philippians 4:1-23

ONCE AGAIN PAUL is ready to finish the letter, and once again so many things crowd into his mind that the farewell stretches on and on as if he cannot bring himself to say good-by to ones so dear to him. Love crowds in between every word of the first verse of this last chapter.

But Christian love is not blind, as Paul proves when he proceeds at once to rebuke his beloved Philippians for a break in their unity. Like the love of God, who loved us "while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5: 8), Paul's love for his friends in Philippi is not lessened by his awareness of their faults. Out of such understanding love pours his final appeals for unity and joy in Christ.

Philippians 4: 1-3—Women, unite!

Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm . . . in the Lord. . . . I entreat Euodia and . . . Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you . . . , true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest . . . , whose names are in the book of life.

One of the minor fascinations of this passage is the mystery of the names. For sixteen hundred years people have been speculating about the identity of Euodia and Syntyche and the "true yokefellow" and Clement. Who were they? One delightfully dubious old tradition has it that Syntyche was not a woman but a man, and who else but the Philippian jailer! The same source identifies Euodia as his wife, which reduces the whole problem in Philippi to the level of a domestic spat. More romantically, some have guessed that the "true yokefellow" is Paul's wife and none other than Lydia, his first convert in Europe.

But happy fantasy aside, it is now well accepted that Euodia and Syntyche were two leading women in the Philippian church, perhaps deaconesses. Paul's tribute to them—they "labored side by side with me in the gospel"—is a mark of the significant standing of women in the early church and particularly at Philippi. Women in Macedonia seemed to enjoy a higher social

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 4: 1-23.
2. Read Chapter 7 in the Study Guide.

to shatter that foundation and destroy its unity. The more important women become in the life of the church, the more important become the purity and unity of their lives together in Christ. But it is reassuring to note that there was still no open break, no schism, and Paul is confident that with the help of their fellow Christians, including the "true yokefellow" (who was, perhaps, the husband of one of the two), the breach will be healed and harmony restored. So again he says, "Rejoice!"

Philippians 4: 4-9—Worry About Nothing; Rejoice in Everything

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer . . . with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and . . . minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, . . . honorable, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . gracious, if there is any excellence, . . . anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have . . . heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul has three important things to say in this passage about the deep roots and wide reaches of the joy that drives out fear and calms anxiety.

1. It is, first of all, *a joy that begins in Christ* (vs. 4-5). Note how easily and naturally Paul works into his plea for harmony and joy a reminder that it takes more than a turning to each other to restore Christian unity in God's people. Three times he repeats the seminal phrase, "in the Lord": "Stand firm in the Lord" (v. 1); "Agree in the Lord" (v. 2); and now again, "Rejoice in the Lord" (v. 4). He is a good teacher. Repetition enforces the lesson he has already taught in ch. 2 that the power for Christian joy and unity comes not from man but from Christ, for being "in Christ." So sure is Paul of this power that he can dismiss the shadow of the quarrel from his mind, depending on Euodia and Syntyche to demonstrate openly what they already have in Christ, namely, the gentle and forgiving spirit that Paul calls "forbearance" (v. 5).

In that confidence the apostle turns again to the joy that never fails him, joy in the Lord, and adds the happy shout of the early Christians, which was their watchword and signal, the last word on the lips of the martyrs as they faced, with a joy their persecutors could never understand, the beasts and the fire and the sword. "The Lord is at hand." "Maranatha." He is with us now; and he will come again. So what is there to fear? Rejoice!

2. It is *a joy without anxiety that grows by prayer* (vs. 6-7). There is indeed absolutely nothing for the Christian to be anxious about, says Paul. In his book *The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians*, Paul Rees quotes a physician's analysis of the "worries" he was called upon to treat as patients. "Forty per-

position than in almost any other part of the ancient world. Macedonian cities were erecting public monuments in honor of prominent women at a time when Greece as a whole was shockingly notorious for its degradation of the role of women in society. The best wife, a Greek historian had said, is the one who is least heard of. But in Macedonia, building on the more favorable attitude to women there, the Christian church took some of its earliest steps toward what has been called its noblest social triumph, the elevation of the status of women. (Joseph B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 55 f.; see also S. Angus, *The Environment of Early Christianity*, pp. 44 ff.)

Nowhere else in the whole record of Paul's missionary journeys do women occupy so remarkable a place in the life of the church as at Philippi. Three women were among its founders, Lydia, Euodia, and Syntyche. The name of a fourth, Stratonike, the wife of Apollophanes, is found in a very early but apocryphal document, the *Acts of Paul*. They were the vanguard in a long line of pioneer women who worked "side by side" with the apostles and prophets in the propagation of the gospel.

There is Phoebe, for example, a deaconess "who ministers to" the church at Cenchraea (Rom. 16: 1); and Prisca, a missionary (a woman apostle!) leader of a small church in Rome (vs. 3-5). There is Priscilla, who converted and instructed Apollos, one of the best-educated and socially prominent leaders in the earliest church. (Chrysostom deduces this from the fact that she is named before her husband in the record, Acts 18: 24-26.) One whole book of the New Testament, The Second Letter of John, is addressed to a woman. By the second century Christian literature is full of references to women teachers and missionaries, like the famous "apostle" Thecla at Iconium, and during the great persecutions the roll of the saints and martyrs was filled with more than a proportionate share of women's names. Among the better classes, women of wealth and social position clearly outnumbered the men in the church.

There seem to have been two orders in the early church for women: deaconesses and "widows." The deaconesses had almost a ministerial function, serving where men could not properly minister in that age, such as in the baptism, instruction, and supervision of the women of the church. The "widows" on the other hand, were essentially Christian social workers, as in I Tim. 5: 10. One very early document, the *Apostolic Church Order*, directs that every church should maintain three widows, of whom two should be devoted to prayer while the other is to be a sick nurse. (See C. Biggs, *The Origins of Christianity*, pp. 268 f.)

It is a melancholy fact that the two women leaders at Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche, would probably be unknown to us except for their quarrel. What a contrast between the first mention of women in that church (Acts, ch. 16), and this second mention here. It was women at prayer who gave the Philippian church its foundation; it is women quarreling who now threaten

law and religion; (4) purity, the supreme virtue in personal morality; (5) loveliness, and all that is best in art (though the word refers more to personal charm than abstract beauty); and (6) graciousness, or praiseworthiness, which is the mark of a good reputation, the highest honor society can bestow.

Paul sums up the whole list of virtues in two words, "excellence" and "praise," and thereby baptizes with his blessing all that is good and praiseworthy in this world wherever it may be found. The Christian's mind need run in no restricted ruts. It has its disciplines, and it is to be kept "in Christ," but it is free to rove the whole world to seek beauty, truth, and goodness.

"Believe; don't think," says the frightened Christian, but it is not the Bible speaking. "Believe, *and* think," says Paul. "Think on these things," as I do. "And the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4: 10-20—A Word of Thanks and a Lesson in Contentment

I rejoice in the Lord . . . that now . . . you have revived your concern for me. . . . Not that I complain . . . ; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. . . . I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. . . . When I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you. . . . Not that I seek the gift; but . . . the fruit which increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more . . . from . . . the gifts you sent. . . . And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever. . . . Amen.

This is Paul's thank-you note for the gifts from his converts in Philippi. What a masterpiece of letter writing! Who but Paul could thank a donor for his gift so graciously, all the time telling him he really didn't need it. No one but Paul could do it, perhaps because no one but Paul saw so clearly as he the glorious paradox of the Christian life. It is a life on two levels. Paul was in prison, but at the same time he was in Christ. The Philippians were to be good citizens of Philippi (ch. 1: 27, where the word "worthy" refers to citizenship), but they were also citizens of heaven (ch. 3: 20). This may be a paradox, but it is not a contradiction. The final secret of contentment, Paul tells his anxious age, is to learn to live on two levels, not in tension, but in peace.

The paradox of the two levels, as well as the resolution of the paradox in Christ, is pointed up in the sharp contrast between a verse at the beginning of the letter and another here near the end. "Paul . . . [a] slave of Jesus Christ." That is how the letter begins. But it closes with that slave asserting, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (v. 13). Only a slave, but he

cent worried over things that never happened. Thirty percent of the worries analysed were related to past matters which were now beyond the patients' control. Twelve percent were anxious about their health, although their only illness was in their imagination. Ten percent worried over their families, their friends or the neighbors, although in most cases there was no substantial basis for the fears that were causing trouble. Just eight percent of the worries seemed to have some basis in conditions that needed to be remedied."

Paul's answer to all such anxieties, real or imagined, is, Take them to the Lord in prayer. That has a dangerous sound to it, to be sure. It could be just another pious platitude, except for the vitalizing little phrase that is attached to it: "with thanksgiving" (v. 6). Pray thankfully, says Paul, not anxiously, not adding to all your other anxieties by wondering how long it will take God to do all you are asking him to do. Paul does not promise that God will do what you ask. All he ever promises is that God hears prayer. But for the privilege of access to the very throne of God who would not be thankful, and who can fail but find peace in his presence? The verse that follows (v. 7) has brought more peace to more troubled minds than all the psychotherapy in the world, rightfully important though psychotherapy is even for Christians. There is somehow a healing, tranquil power even in the simple repetition of the verse: "The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." This is Paul's promise from the Spirit to the anxious. Perhaps in English the words are almost too soothing. Paul's actual language is almost military. There is no weakness in it, but power. "God's peace shall stand sentry, shall keep guard over your hearts," is how Bishop Lightfoot paraphrases it.

3. It is a joy that delights in every good thing (vs. 8-9). In v. 8, Paul moves from the world of a Judeo-Christian benediction into the clear, cold world of Greek philosophy. The list of virtues that he begins to enumerate is pure Greek. This is rare for Paul, who was all Jewish, and a little Roman, but Greek only around the edges. He was raised, however, in a Greek university town, and he was writing to a church in Greece, and he was no narrow iconoclast. All that was good in Rome he was willing to use for the gospel. Perhaps he is reminding his converts here that all that is good in Greece, too—all the truth and riches of the highest philosophy the world has known outside of Christ—this too can be used for the gospel.

There is a change in the language and in the atmosphere, but there is no real break in the continuity of thought. Paul has spoken, in v. 7, of the peace of God which keeps our minds in Christ Jesus. This is its protection and its source of strength, but the language might also suggest a restricting confinement. As if to correct any such misapprehension, in the next verse Paul begins to describe the high, free horizons of the Christian mind. It delights in all the greatest virtues, the loftiest goals that man anywhere and anytime has ever conceived: (1) truth, the goal of science and philosophy; (2) honor, the highest prize of human ethics; (3) justice (or righteousness), the aim of

of the world center in the unbridged gap between these two levels of life—between need and abundance, weakness and power, want and contentment. The lesson of Philippians is that the gap has been bridged by Jesus Christ. He crossed the gulf. God became Man, becoming poor that we might be rich. In him, says Paul, all God's "riches in glory" are ours.

But there is one other key word, *needs*. It does not read, *wants*. To learn the difference is to know another of the secrets of the Christian answer to anxiety.

Philippians 4: 21-23—A Personal Farewell

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. . . . All the saints greet you. . . .
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Even after he has said "Amen," Paul cannot quite bring himself to end the letter to his friends whom he may never see again. He greets them once more, every one; repeating as he does so the vital phrase "in Christ Jesus," which has breathed life and power into every part of the letter. Then, as he ends, his last words pick up the theme with which he started, unity. In the old King James Version the benediction reads, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," but the better manuscripts have Paul's final emphasis in his last words to the Philippians falling on unity. Not "you all" and the diversity of the plural, but "your spirit" and the unity of the singular. "Be with your spirit," his benediction ends, for "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" has indeed made them one.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What bearing has ch. 4: 1-7 on the situation at Philippi?
2. In the first three verses what are the three things Paul gives the Philippians to do "in the Lord"?
3. Is the role of men and women in the church today different from that in Paul's day? How?
4. What are two great qualities of the Christian life as set forth by Paul in vs. 4 and 5?
5. How is the essential character of the letter reflected in ch. 4: 4-7?
6. What was Paul's secret of contentment?
7. What makes Paul most happy about the gift from the church in Philippi?

has unlimited power. The New Testament way to power and joy and contentment and peace is to become the servant, the slave, the captive of the Servant Lord.

“Make me a captive, Lord, And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword, And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life’s alarms When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms, And strong shall be my hand.

“My heart is weak and poor Until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure—It varies with the wind.
It cannot freely move Till Thou hast wrought its chain;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love, And deathless it shall reign.”

On one level of life Paul was a prisoner in Rome and a servant of Christ and of all Christ’s people. On this level he needed help and needed it desperately. When the Philippians responded in love to his need, his gratitude was as genuine as their love. That level, the level of need, is as real and inescapable as hunger and thirst and sickness and death.

But there is another level, the level of needs supplied (v. 19), of anxieties quieted (vs. 6-7), of utter contentment (v. 11), and of power overflowing (v. 13). At this level Paul had no need of human gifts, and no more wants. He had learned to be content.

This part of the letter, as J. H. Michael, quoting Carlyle, points out, is inseparably associated with Oliver Cromwell. As the Great Protector began to weaken of the sickness that was to cause his death, he called for a Bible and asked that Phil. 4: 11-13 be read to him. He listened, and said: “‘This Scripture did once save my life; when my eldest son died; which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did.’ And then repeating the words of the text himself, and reading the tenth and eleventh verses, of Paul’s contentment and submission to the will of God in all conditions—said he: ‘It’s true, Paul, *you* have learned this and attained to this measure of grace: but what shall *I* do? Ah poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out! I find it so!’ But reading on to the thirteenth verse, where Paul saith, ‘I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,’—then faith began to work, and his heart to find support and comfort, and he said thus to himself, ‘He that was Paul’s Christ is my Christ too!’ And so drew waters out of the well of Salvation.”

Paul’s Christ is our Christ, and by him, says Paul, “God will supply your every need.” The key word is *supply*. Scientists tell us the real problem is not resources but supply. There is enough food in the world for all if man could only distribute it. There is enough power in the sunlight falling on the Arizona desert to keep everybody in the world warm and to turn all the dynamos on earth, if we could only harness and distribute it. All the anxieties



FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. What are the most striking characteristics of Paul's letter to the Philippians?
2. Review all the different answers to anxiety that Paul suggests in this letter.
3. Try writing a one-page summary of Philippians in letter style.



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Philippe changes the world: -

① Empire vs. Republic

Caesar - d. 44 BC

Antony + Octavian - defeat Brutus + Cassius 42 BC. Philippe -

Antony marries Cleopatra (the already married to Octavian's sister) 36 BC

Octavian defeats Antony + Cleopatra 31 AD.

② Octavian - 31-14 AD.

Augustus (gains title in 27 AD).

Closed temple of Janus for first time in 200 yrs. 29 AD Pax Romana.

Birth of Jesus. 4 BC.

③ Tiberius (14-37) - a general, son

of Octavian's wife Livia by her first husband. Adopted.

Returns to Capri - 26 AD.

Crucifixion of Jesus - 33 AD.

④ Caligula (37-41)

insane. Tried to erect statue of himself as a god in the Temple.

Assassinated, 41 AD.

⑤ Claudius (41-54).

Considered an imbecile - but rather wise. Four wives -

Messalina - executed for her vices

Married his niece - who married in 50 AD. - the successor for her

son by a former husband, Nero.

⑥ Nero (54-68)

From Joy in an Anxious Age (by Sam & Estera Misset)
more chapters. He writes seven verses in ch. 4, says "Finally" again, and goes on for twice as many more verses. Even after he has said "Amen" (ch. 4: 20), he cannot stop but adds a three-verse postscript.

Analytically, the letter divides into six main sections:

1. Greetings and prayer for the Philippians (ch. 1: 1-11).
2. Then the subject shifts to Paul's situation in Rome (ch. 1: 12-26).
3. His thought turns back to Philippi with an appeal for unity (chs. 1: 27 to 2: 18).
4. Again in Rome, he tells of his future plans (ch. 2: 19-30).
5. To Philippi once more, warnings and appeals (chs. 3: 1 to 4: 8).
6. Thanks for the gift from Philippi (ch. 4: 9-23).

But we will divide the letter a little differently and outline it as follows:

PHILIPPIANS: AN OUTLINE

- I. The Joys of Partnership (ch. 1: 1-11)
 - A. Paul and His Partner: A Greeting (vs. 1-2)
 1. The partnership is for mission (v. 1)
 2. The partnership is in Christ (vs. 1-2)
 - B. Paul and His Partners: A Prayer (vs. 3-11)
 1. They were his joy in the past (vs. 3-5)
 2. They are his beloved friends now (vs. 7-8)
 3. He is confident of their future (vs. 6, 9-11)
- II. The Joys of Adversity (ch. 1: 12-30)
 - A. The Advantages of Opposition (vs. 12-18)
 1. Imprisonment can help the gospel (vs. 12-14)
 2. Even church division has its uses (vs. 15-18)
 - B. The Hope of Deliverance (vs. 19-26)
 1. Our hope is in Christ (vs. 19-21)
 2. Our deliverance is for others (vs. 22-26)
 - C. The Christians' Part in Victory (ch. 1: 27-30)
 1. Be moral (v. 27)
 2. Be united (v. 27)
 3. Be brave (v. 28)
 4. Accept suffering (v. 29)
 5. Be involved (v. 30)
- III. The Joys of Unity (ch. 2: 1-11)
 - A. The Call to Unity: Be One (vs. 1-2)
 - B. The Prerequisite of Unity: Be Humble (vs. 3-4)
 - C. The Secret of Unity: Be in Christ (vs. 5-11)
 1. The power is in Christ (v. 5)
 2. The example is Christ (vs. 6-11)

On Partnership

On Joy in Times of Trouble

On the Unity of the Church

- IV. The Pursuit of Unity (ch. 2: 12-30)
 - A. The Responsibility of Unity (vs. 12-13)
 - B. The Marks of Responsibility (vs. 14-18)
 - C. Leadership for Unity (vs. 19-30)
 1. Timothy, the missionary partner (vs. 19-24)
 2. Epaphroditus, the local leader (vs. 25-30)
- V. Warnings Against Three Threats to Unity (ch. 3: 1-21)
 - A. Against Self-righteous Legalists (vs. 1-11)
 1. Rites are nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 1-3)
 2. Race is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 4-7)
 3. Our righteousness is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 8-11)
 - B. Against Self-satisfied Saints (vs. 12-16)
 - C. Against Self-serving Sinners (vs. 17-21)
- VI. Final Appeals for Joy and Unity in Christ (ch. 4: 1-23)
 - A. Appeal for Unity (vs. 1-3)
 - B. Appeal for Joy (vs. 4-7)
 - C. Concluding Remarks (vs. 8-23)
 1. The Christian's mind (vs. 8-9)
 2. The Christian's resources (vs. 10-23)

On the Way to Achieve Unity in the Church

On Three Threats to Xn Unity

Final

STUDY HELPS

1. Read together Acts, ch. 16.
What three segments of society were represented by the first converts in Philippi? What segments of society is your church reaching? Does it miss any? Why?
2. How did Paul and Timothy make use of Roman influences in Philippi for the advantage of the gospel? Applying this lesson to ourselves, list ways in which we might take advantage of social change in our own society for the sake of our revolutionary faith.
3. Review the reasons for Paul's great interest in Philippi. What can we learn from him in terms of strategic planning? Where are the most important centers for Christian mission in today's world?
4. List the reasons why our age is called "An Anxious Age." As you begin to read Philippians, jot down any Christian answers to these specific anxieties that you may find.
5. Locate and begin to familiarize yourselves with some of the following commentaries and study books (perhaps available in the church library):

William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (The Daily Study Bible).

The Scripture Lesson is from Phillips translation of Phillipians 2: 5-8

I do not know whether to call it balance or rythm, whether to call it tension or resolution of tension. This dynamic alternation between Christ's emptying of himself and his high exaltation between his death glory. But whatever we call it -- it is the secret of the final success of this mission to which we are called and in which we are involved. It comes in two parts. The first is what we do. And the second is what God does.

Let Christ be your example, says Paul. And what did Christ do? He stripped himself. He emptied himself. And What did God do? He lifted Him high, and gave Him the name. "And that is why, in the end, every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God and the Father. It is as simple/as hard as that, and as old as the way of the cross. But it spells the difference between failure and success.

I suppose that there is no where in the world where in our mission we have failed with a more resounding crash or succeeded more brilliantly than in Korea. Why? We failed, I think, where we reversed the balance or broke the rythm; and we succeeded where in a measure we followed it.

Take our failure. If you want to see failure in mission come to Korea. Where else in the world do you have a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ

Presbyterian Church, and Jesus is not speaking to Christ. Now when I suggest that the secret of success is an emptying in being stripped, let me emphasize that the important thing is who does the stripping. Jesus stripped himself. In Korea we were stripped, all right. We lost our seminaries' entire theological library. But it was no voluntary stripping of ourselves. We were robbed by the schismatics. That is the wrong pattern. Instead of stripping ourselves, we really exalted ourselves. Some of us for our pure doctrine and separation from evil; some of us for our pure hearts and the unity of the church. And we gave ourselves the name, Jesus and Christ. No wonder we failed.

But look also at our successes. I am biased, I know, but I am convinced that the greatest single congregation of Christians in the world is in Seoul, Korea. It is the church of everlasting joy, the Yumknock Presbyterian Church. Look at its closed circuit

TV carrying the morning services beyond the boundaries of the church to waiting hundreds in rooms and halls outside. Look at it 8,000 members, its 40 evangelists ~~in~~ in villages throughout Korea, its two missionaries to Thailand. But don't look at its ~~high costs~~ huge membership and at closed circuit television for the secret of its success. The secret is still the old pattern, the way of the cross; the stripping of self and trust in God. It is a secret that comes alive for me when I think of two women in that great congregation.// One is a widow, a refugee. She lost everything she had. She built herself a little hut of cardboard and tin. She sold small goods in the street to make a living. And as time went on she began to prosper until finally she was able to build a new house for herself. Not of cardboard and tin, but with strong walls and a roof of tile, not of rice thatch. But while the refugees had been living themselves in huts they began to build a church and cardboard and tin was not enough for the Church of God. They built their church of stone. And the elders and deacons came around to the people for the building fund. The patterns are the same so often all over the world, it's the power behind the patterns that makes the difference. They came to the widow but everything she owned had been put into her new home, she had nothing for the church. That night she could not sleep. And the next day she awoke with her mind made up. She moved out of her new home back into her hut of cardboard and tin.

4/

The new home she rented and gave the rent to the building of her church. That's the way the pattern for success must begin in a Church of Jesus Christ, with the stripping of self.//I have heard Dr. _____ Hahn tell of another woman in his church. She had had only an elementary education but one day he saw her bringing a college professor with her to church. She had no education, she was nothing and he was a college professor, but with the sublimest confidence that God can use on nothing, our emptiness, she brought the professor to church ~~unbeliever~~ unbeliever though he was, and Christ was lifted up, and the name proclaimed, and the professor came into the fellowship and the faith of the Christian Church.//

It is also old and so simple and so rarely tried. Deny yourself, that Christ may be exalted. How innocently, how guilelessly the shrewd old apostle goes right on to suggest that the Philipians do this very thing "without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be God's children, blameless, sincere, and wholesome, living in a warped and diseased world, and shining there like lights in a dark place."//

If you have stopped shining for a while, you Christians - and I must confess that too much of my own ministry in Korea is spent trying to cool down my frustrations rather than lighting up my affirmations - if you have stopped shining for a while, perhaps this passage from Paul's letter to the Philipians will suggest one reason ~~why~~ why. "Remember the example of Jesus Christ ...He did not cling to his ~~own~~ prerogatives, but stripped himself."

Paradox

Let me read for our Scripture lesson for the morning some verses put together from Paul's letter to the Philippians:

"Paul and Timothy, slaves of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi: - (1:1)

"Have this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." (2:5-6)

"I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content... I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me." (4:11, 13-14).

~~I think~~ ^{I think} it is altogether fitting, in a meeting ^{like this of missiologists} ~~of missiologists~~ to take ~~an~~ ^{from} an lesson of the morning, these two great paradoxes of the letter to the Philippians. (I) The first is the more familiar: the paradox of the Lord who became a servant. "Who was ~~divine~~ ^{God} by his very nature... but emptied himself... and took..." (II) But there is ^{another less obvious} ~~a second~~ paradox in the letter: the paradox of the slave who claims unlimited power: "Paul... a slave of Christ Jesus." That is how the letter ~~opens~~ ^{begins} - properly meek and humble. But it closes with that same slave declaring "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me."

There is a model for ~~there is a dynamic~~ ^{upon paradox - the dynamic of the mind of Christ.} ~~of mission~~ in this interplay of paradox ^{of reversal} ~~of reversal~~, followed by ~~counter-reversal~~. The Lord becomes servant and ~~hides~~ ^{he is given the name above all names.} in his ~~secret~~ ^{is} the secret of his lordship - "Therefore" he is exalted; And the Apostle ~~he~~ ^{is} (the missionary) becomes slave, and finds in absolute obedience, the freedom and power of his Lord. "I can do all things."

I don't need to belabour the lesson ~~of the text for missions~~. When we are most tempted to speak as lords, with all the authority that our commissions, our talents and our learning command, then we are least like our Lord. The call to leadership is strangely muted in Scripture. The call is ^{rather} to be servants of the servants of God.

And when we are most jealous of our freedoms and rights - then perhaps is the time to try it the other way around, - the N.T. way. Try being a slave, for that is the ^{Christian} way to freedom and the beginning of ~~true power~~, the only power that is not corruptible - the power of the mind of Christ.

To paraphrase Luther: "The Christian missionary is most free lord of all, and subject to none; the Christian missionary is most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."

~~The mind of Christ~~ - Have this mind in you." ^{then} ~~let them then describe~~ us - the obedience of Christ our Lord, and the assurance of Paul, his slave. Remember - ^{it's} not the freedom of a lord, and the obedience of a slave. ^{it's} The other way around or we are lost: the obedience of a lord, the freedom of a slave.

This ~~is~~ ^{is} the pattern ~~of~~ ^{for} mission after "the mind of Christ".

13.8. Jesus Christ is always the same, yesterday, today and forever.

Rev 21.5. And He who sat upon the throne said "Behold I make all things new"

Prayer: Lord - When we are called to the ministry of Thy Word, we are most conscious of our weakness ^{that Thy grace is sufficient.} "Take us, weak as we are, and transform us by Thy grace, that Thy strength may be made manifest ~~in~~ ^{through} our weakness."

As we bring ~~these~~ this consultation to a close, my mind turns to the two ~~that I have to say~~ ^{issues} ~~revolves around these two poles~~ ^{that} ~~these two~~

great paradoxes of the Epistle to the Philippians.

I. The first ^{is most} ~~paradox~~ ^{is} ~~made familiar~~; to us as the theme of a former Conference of the Alliance, ~~is~~ the paradox of the Lord who became a servant. Who was divine by nature, but did not set store upon equality with God, but emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant.

II. But there is a second paradox in the epistle: the paradox of the slave who ^{claims} ~~with~~ unlimited power. "Paul... a slave of Jesus Christ..". That is how the letter begins - properly meek and humble. But it closes with that same slave declaring, near the end, "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me."

This is the ~~what~~ ^{how} a dynamic interplay of paradox ^{an initial reversal} ~~reversal~~ ^{followed by} ~~more surprising~~ counter-reversal. The Lord becomes servant, and ~~therefore~~ ^{therefore} there finds the secret of his lordship. - "Therefore" he is exalted; ~~"therefore", he is given "the name"~~ "Jesus Christ is Lord". And the Apostle, ^{freedom +} ~~if he would have power~~, becomes slave and finds the ^{power} ~~power~~ of his Lord. "I can do all things"

I'll not belabor the lesson for numeraries & minileaders. The lesson is easy to draw for theologians.

When we are most tempted to.

A ~~lesson~~ ^{lesson}, perhaps for ~~theologians~~ ^{theologians} ~~like~~ ^{like} ~~us~~ ^{us}? ~~We speak as lords, with the best authority~~ ^{we are least like our Lord. The call to (theological) leadership is sharply muted in Scripture. The call is to be servants of the servants of God.}

When we are most

~~tempted~~ ^{tempted} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~guard our freedom with jealous care.~~ ^{guard our freedom with jealous care.}

Try it the other way around, the New Testament way. Ask how you can serve, for that is the path of ~~the~~ lordship. Try being a slave, for that is the way to freedom.

To paraphrase Luther: "The Christian theologian is most free lord of all, and subject to none; the Christian theologian is most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."

Let that describe ^{us} ~~you~~ - the obedience of Christ, ^{our} ~~your~~ Lord; and the assurance of Paul, his slave. Remember - not the freedom of a lord, and the obedience of a slave. The other way around, or you are lost: the obedience of a lord; the freedom of His slave.

The N.T. model of a Xn leader - revolves around two poles.

PARADOX

What I want to say to you - and to myself - in this closing meditation revolves around two poles. And those poles are not evangelism and social action. Talking too much about that kind of polarization sometimes only leaves ~~me~~ ^{me} stranded helplessly between the poles, and ~~was~~ ^{was} really so desperately eager ^{now that I'm} to ~~touch both bases~~ ^{really do believe in both}, that ~~was~~ ^{I find} that I've bypassed the most important questions: such as ~~haven't time to share with each other~~ just how we do go about telling a real person about the real Christ, or what ^{are} the conditions ~~are~~ for starting a Christian people's movement - or, on the other hand, what does a Christian ^{actually} ~~really~~ ^{do} in a revolution. Instead, I ~~say~~ ^{and up just saying} you ought to tell others about Xt., you ought to be socially involved.

~~So~~ ^{So} these aren't the poles I'm ~~talking~~ ^{going to talk} about. The two poles I want to ~~talk about~~ ^{call to your attention} are the two great paradoxes of the Epistle to the Philippians.

The first is the paradox of the Lord who became a Servant. "Christ Jesus who was of the same nature as God, but did not prize that equality; rather, he made himself nothing, and took the nature of a slave." "He became obedient," says Paul. ~~Now as an evangelistic missionary, I'm quite certain~~ ^{As an evangelist, I'm quite certain} ~~the most dangerous time in an evangelist's life~~ ^{is the most important time} ~~everybody knows that evangelism~~ ^{is the most important thing the Christian can ever do}. As an ^{Xn leader} evangelist, I'm quite certain that there is no higher calling than ^{leadership} evangelism. I'm equally certain that no one more needs to be reminded of the absolute Christian necessity for servant-hood, for humble obedience than we ^{leaders} evangelists. Particularly successful ^{It's almost unfair to ask us to be humble.} evangelists. We have so much to teach other poor, plodding Christians who don't know how to make the faith leap, and spread and come alive. We're the heralds of the King - trumpets, uniform & all. ~~No, that's not the picture~~ ^{of the evangelist}. We're servants, called to obedience. ~~Our~~

~~call is not to write great sermons~~ To listen and obey - not to shout - except for joy. I ~~once heard my father~~ ^{Some one} once write a brief life of my father, and called it "Praise of Evangelists". I'm glad it was after he was dead. He would have turned purple. It was his conviction that Christ's greatest evangelists were anonymous - two

being calling attention to Jesus Christ, to call attention to themselves. If you really want to be an ^{evangelist} evangelist, "Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus, 'who made himself nothing, and became a servant..'"

But lest all this ~~self-denial~~ self-denial and humility seems too passive to you let me go on to point out that Philippians has a beautiful double-paradox - turning back in on itself with a liberating burst of ~~self~~-affirmation: not just the lord who became a servant, but the slave with the power of a lord.

"Paul.. a slave of Jesus Christ.." That is how the epistle begins, meek and mild. But it closes with that same slave saying, near the end of the letter, "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me." Only a slave, but he can do anything! What a reversal. The lord becomes a servant; while his slave becomes omnipotent! What a dynamic interplay of Christian paradox.

Most of us, I am afraid, long ^{for} ~~for~~ ~~power and success~~ ^{to succeed} - ^{we want power} success in evangelism, ^{want the last without the first. The power without the obedience.} ~~perhaps~~ - too much to submit to slavery, ^{to service} ~~to Christ~~. And for that reason, most of us are not successful ^{leaders} evangelists. If you want power ~~for evangelism~~, don't look for ~~it~~. ~~Try looking at Christ~~ look at Christ. Try being a slave, for that is the N.T. way to Christian power.

Luther put it this way. "The Christian man (evangelist) is most free lord of all and subject to none. The Christian evangelist is most dutiful servant of all and subject to everyone."

Remember. Not the ^{power} ~~freedom~~ of a lord and the obedience of a ~~servant~~ slave. It's the other way around, or you are lost: the obedience of a lord, and the ~~freedom~~ power of his slave."

But do not carry that line of argument too far. To be Biblical, it must be pointed out that it was not the division over which Paul was rejoicing. Philippians gives no real comfort to separatists; from beginning to end it is a plea for unity. The reason Paul can rejoice even in the midst of division is that he has supreme confidence in the gospel of Christ which, preached even in envy and rivalry, yet speaks with such compelling power that it can convert and save. "What then," he says in verse 18. "In every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in that ~~we~~ rejoice."

Let this be a ^{lesson} comfort to us when we are sore burdened about our own unhappy divisions in Korea. ^{How do you know that's true? Some times seem to} What glowing reports visitors sometimes write about us. Flooded with the unforgettable impressions that a short visit to Korea can make--crowded prayer-meetings, sacrificial giving, revival preaching, and irresistible evangelistic advance--they often carry back home the conviction that the Korean Church is more of a "first century, New Testament church" than any they have ever seen.

Well, it is all true. Our Korean Church is Biblical, like Berea (Acts 17:11); missionary-minded like Philippi, orthodox like Ephesus (Rev. 2:2), and consecrated like the churches of Macedonia who "first gave themselves to the Lord" (2 Cor 8:5). Thank God all that is true. But take another look at that early church. Read Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians. Don't forget Ananias and Sapphira. Remember that Judas ~~Isch~~ Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples, and Laodicea was a first-century, New Testament church, too, and God spews it out of his mouth (Rev. 3:16). ~~Korea is a first-century church, all right, but in the full Biblical, not the popular sense, so~~ Don't long for a golden age that never was. ^{and that's true} So if Korea is, at times, as legalistic as Galatia, as self-righteous as Laodicea; if it is, sometimes, alas, as untrustworthy as Ananias, and as full of division as Rome--~~what~~ then? Christ is proclaimed. Rejoice!

^{It is} How strange that Rome today stands for monolithic unity, ^{massive} whereas ^{let me read in some of} To Paul, in the 1st c. prison, it was a tragic object lesson in church division, and to everyone who reads these verses some unfortunate current example comes to mind. The ^{when Calvin read} situation reminded Calvin of Avignon. When I read the passage I say to myself, "He's describing Taegu". Poor Korea. Where else in the world do you have a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ Presbyterian Church fighting against each other. ~~Is~~ Christ divided? I have talked to a number of rather prominent Korean non-Christians. Almost to a man they have written off the Protestant Church as a possibility for the "unifying factor" which they all feel Korea desperately needs. The Roman Church, perhaps. Not the Protestants. It reminds me of Dr. Douglas Horton's remark at Lund, "When the world is lying broken and half-dead on one side of the road, it won't be helped much by a church lying broken and half-dead on the other."

And on top of all our divisions, to have some segments of the church turn viciously on the missionary seems like the last straw. It has happened in just about every denomination in Korea. I hope I never have to endure what Dr. Adams was forced to endure at the last meeting of Taegu Presbytery.

If it happens to you--and it may--the answer is not to pack up and go home. Sit down first and read Philippians. It all happened to Paul. "Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry...out of partisanship, not sincerely

but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment" (1:15,17). *What then; Christ's problem?*

This passage so lifted Calvin out of his depression over the carryings-on at Avignon that he was able to say, "(Like Paul), we, on hearing that that impure dog (Peter) Carolus was scattering the seeds of pure doctrine at Avignon and elsewhere, gave thanks to God because he had made use of that most profligate and worthless villain for his glory" (Calvin, Commentary). *A lot of times, I think, here in Korea, we...*

At least the doctrine is pure, however profligate the "dogs" may be. *(here in Korea) where even the liberals are conservative.* So let us rejoice with Paul and give thanks to God, even in the midst of division. Christ is proclaimed, and in that we can rejoice.

One of the secrets - vs. 19 - when everything looks black - look around for something to rejoice in. Discouraged in Rome, Paul had a cheerful news from Philippi. So here - there - but also there. Always something to rejoice about - faith, ... way, ...
Paul's third joy was his hope of deliverance. Verse 19: "Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Christ this will turn out for my deliverance," he writes, and goes on to speak of his hope of coming to Philippi again (vs. 26). *It is probable that he was released for a while.*

to me The situation was hopeless, but Paul had hope. Where is the quickening of that hope in the church today? There is a ~~current~~ disturbing current of defeatism sweeping through the free world. *long at* Arnold Toynbee, a Christian, nevertheless argues in his book, The Fearful Choice, that since a nuclear war would bring the total destruction of England and perhaps the world, such a war must be prevented at all costs, so we must away with our nuclear armaments, and accept at once from Russia the best possible terms.

hope How different from Paul. After all, Nero to his age was not much less a disaster than the atom bomb is to ours. Toynbee's prison of fear is worse *more dangerous* than Paul's iron chains. *Paul had a hope.* When danger threatens, and the world caves in, no syncretistic, synthetic, "Symmachan" hope, *such as Toynbee's pessimism* fashioned from all the world's great religions, will do. Toynbee's own defeatism betrays the weakness of that kind of faith. Only a singular hope like Paul's will do. *It's the hope we need to keep us going on the field when everything seems to go wrong.*

Our world today is like the great flood of 1923 on the Taitong River, near Pyengyang. Every summer father would take the whole family along with him as he visited churches along the river. We would take a long river boat, build a little thatch-roofed house on it and spend the summer going up and down the river. For us boys, that was the best part of the year.

But the summer of 1923 was unusual. We were anchored about two miles above the city of Pyengyang one evening when the boatmen told us that the rains had begun in the mountains. That usually meant the beginning of the annual summer flood, so we moved the house-boat into a sheltered place and tied it to a large willow tree and prepared to wait out the flood. That night the river rose 18 feet. That was nothing unusual, but the river continued to rise all that day and the next night. On the morning of the second day the flood reached the 40-foot level, and at noon the flood waters suddenly broke through at the base of the peninsula to which we were tied, and we found ourselves on an island, cut off from the shore by a great boiling, muddy stream.

And still the waters kept rising. By evening even the island was covered, and only the trees stood out from the flood. That night we heard cries for help as the great flood swept whole villages away down the river.

JOY FOR AN ANXIOUS AGE

Samuel Hugh + Eileen F. MOFFETT

1966



JOY FOR AN ANXIOUS AGE

A STUDY GUIDE ON PHILIPPIANS

for individuals, circles, youth-adult groups,
and men's and women's groups
who will study and try to discern what God is saying
through his Word to his people in this anxious age

BY SAMUEL HUGH AND EILEEN FLOWER MOFFETT

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Contents

Preface	7
Chapter 1 Troubled Times	9
2 Thank God for Partners	16
3 The Joys of Adversity	22
4 A Mind for Joy	28
5 The Pursuit of Unity	36
6 Three Threats to Unity	42
7 Final Appeals	49



Preface

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS is a Christian answer to anxiety. It is God's message through Paul to the church in an anxious age. Its theme is joy.

The question is, How could such great joy spring from such troubled times? The apostle was in prison. The world was going to ruin all about him. His favorite church, the congregation in Philippi, was in danger of division. Yet with the serenest confidence he wrote: "I am glad and rejoice. . . . Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me" (Phil. 2: 17-18). Why? What was there for him to be joyful about?

It should be worth a little time for us in our own age of anxiety to search this beautiful letter for the answer. We may then be rewarded with the discovery of two of the rarest secrets of the Christian life: How to be happy in an unhappy world and how to find unity in the midst of division.

The search should also give us an unparalleled picture of the inner, private life and thought of the greatest Christian who ever lived, for this is the most personal and most affectionate of all Paul's letters.

This study guide is divided into seven chapters. The first is introductory, outlining the background of the letter. The other six deal in succession with the major divisions of the letter. Each chapter contains study helps and an additional section for those with the will and the time for more intensive study.

S. H. M. and E. F. M.

THE AUTHORS

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This Protestant seminary is now the largest one in all Asia. The present enrollment is over 250, and more than one thousand of its graduates are serving the church in Korea.

TROUBLED TIMES

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS was written from Rome probably about A.D. 62, only thirty years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and half-way through the reign of the Emperor Nero.

The nineteen hundred years that have passed since then have changed the world in almost everything but its anxieties. Today's man may conquer space, but he still wrestles as unsuccessfully as the Romans and the Philippians with the harder problems of war and poverty and unhappiness and the ultimate meaning of life.

The Anxious World of the First Century

Like ours, the age of the apostle was an age of war. Rome was the strongest power on earth, but it was discovering to its surprise that it takes more than an army to keep the world at peace. At the edges of its strength, on the far borders, there was always war. What Viet Nam is to the world today, the British Isles and Armenia were to Rome while Paul was writing to Philippi. He was writing to a city that knew war at first hand, a city of soldiers and their families. Philippi had been chosen by the Emperor as a home for veterans of Rome's wars. There were men still living there who had fought against Anthony and Cleopatra. It is not surprising, therefore, to note how often he uses martial language in the letter.

Like ours also that age was an age of uneasy extremes of wealth and poverty. The Emperor Nero could spend the equivalent of \$175,000 on Egyptian roses for just one banquet, yet one out of every three or four persons in Rome was a slave. As Rome's wealth increased, its virtue seemed to disappear. The cities decayed. Women were warned to stay off the streets of Rome at night. Every pleasure and every vice was available. Philippi, as a Roman colony, had privileged status and had become a little Rome with all the trappings and temptations of Roman baths and theaters and Dionysian revels. (Samuel Dill, *Roman Society: From Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 32; D. A. Hays, *Paul and His Epistles*, p. 410.) Note how Paul warns the church there against the enticements of luxury, the "god of the belly" (Phil. 3: 19), and encourages the Philippians in the right use of money (ch. 4: 14-18).

Like ours it was an age of rapid social change. Philippi saw the fading of "the glory that was Greece." It had been founded in northern Greece (Macedonia) by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Now it had passed into the hands of Rome, but though the language of the city was Latin the country people still spoke Greek. The West of that day was being Romanized, as the world of today is being Westernized. There were many who bemoaned the changing of the times, but not Paul. At Philippi he wasted no time lamenting the passing of the old, but used the new Roman ways to the advantage of the gospel. (Acts, ch. 16.)

Rome itself was changing from Republic to Empire, and the city of Philippi had figured prominently in the change, for it was on the plains around the city that one of the decisive battles of history took place. There, about one hundred years before the coming of Paul, Augustus, the first emperor and the nephew of Julius Caesar, defeated the last Republican, Brutus, and Rome moved from democracy to dictatorship. Its age of rugged individualism came to an end. Emperors shook off the authority of the Senate and ruled like Oriental despots. By the time Paul wrote this letter they were even beginning to be worshiped like Oriental gods. (Dill, p. 617.) When Paul reminded the Philippians that there is a "name which is above every name," and that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:9-11), he was calling them to a confession that would clash head on with emperor worship and in a year or two would provoke the first of the great Roman persecutions.

But above all, like ours, that age was an age when life too easily lost its meaning and man too easily gave up hope. The frantic vices of the Empire were but a vain search for happiness when real hope of happiness had died, a kind of Roman existentialism.

The best philosopher of the age was Seneca. He was a Roman millionaire who could lie on a purple couch under golden ceilings and murmur in strange despair that life is living death, "a fatal gift of which the best that can be said is that the torture is short" (Dill, p. 14).

In the same city, Rome, was a Jewish prisoner in chains. The sad and suave philosopher and the fiery little Jew probably never met. The social contacts of a prisoner in Rome were limited. But when Paul wrote to Philippi, out of that prison cell came a trumpet call of Christian joy that is the best answer ever written to Seneca's unhappy gospel of universal pessimism.

The Happy Prisoner

No one seriously doubts that Paul was the author of this letter. About a hundred years ago it was fashionable for a time, particularly in Germany, to attack the genuineness of the letter on the ground that it is too gentle and kind to be a letter of the thundering Paul. Modern scholarship, however, has discredited this line of criticism. As one recent commentator puts it, "This is a bit like saying that the Churchill who delivered warlike speeches about

Hitler could not have written friendly letters to Roosevelt. . . . If this letter was not written by Paul, nothing was." (Carroll E. Simcox, *They Met at Philippi*, p. 21. For a discussion of the rise and fall of the critics' attack, see M. R. Vincent, *Philippians* [The International Critical Commentary], pp. xxv ff.)

There is not quite the same degree of certainty about where Paul was when he wrote the letter. It was either Rome or Ephesus, probably Rome. The general situation described could fit either city. Even the reference to the "praetorian guard" (ch. 1: 13) does not rule out the possibility of Ephesus. But the weight of tradition, and the tone of Paul's references to his imprisonment and to the church in the city where he is imprisoned, make Rome the much more probable choice. The date, therefore, is about A.D. 62, ten years later than if it were written from Ephesus. (See Ernest F. Scott, "Philippians," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11, pp. 5-7.)

What the letter says is much more important than where and when it was written. It tells how a Christian, even in jail, can be happier than the wisest and richest philosopher in the greatest city on earth. Compare Seneca's "life is a fatal gift," with Paul's "I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content" (ch. 4: 11). Moreover, there was something deeper than contentment to Paul's happiness. He was a man who knew the exquisite joy of vision—a vision that once had called him "over to Macedonia" to Philippi, and a vision that now even through prison bars showed him the whole world as Christ's. (Ch. 2: 10-11.)

Philippi and the Christian Mission

It may have been the Philippian church's strategic position in Paul's world vision of Christian mission that gave it a special place in his heart and made this letter the warmest and most affectionate of all his letters to the churches. (Ch. 1: 7-9.) Paul loved Philippi as his first church in Europe. But more than that—for the geographical distinction did not mean as much then as it does now—Philippi marked an important step forward in the Christian march on Rome. Paul had already preached to Jews and Greeks. At Philippi, which had special Roman status as a colony of Roman citizens, he was reaching the edge of Rome itself, and Rome was the gateway to the whole world. It is in this global sense that Paul can describe the church in Philippi as "the beginning of the gospel" (ch. 4: 15).

Philippi was indeed strategically located for mission in the world of that day. The main arterial highway, the Egnatian Way, between Asia and Rome, was guarded at the edge of Europe by the forts of Philippi. So when Christianity entered Western history from Asia, it came with Paul through Philippi.

One of the most overworked myths of our time is that Western imperialism invaded the Orient through the Christian missionary movement. Philippians reminds us that this is all wrong. The first missionary went the other way.

The gospel did not "invade" Asia; it came from Asia, and its first beachhead in the European West, so far as we have any record, was at Philippi. Furthermore, in the Communist myth, the missionary is the aggressor. In Philippi he is in prison; and he is in prison again when he writes to the Philippians. In the Communist myth the missionary buys his converts with capitalist gold. In Philippi, again, it is just the other way around. It is the converts who are paying the missionary. The whole letter to Philippians is really just a thank-you note for their gifts. In the Communist myth, the missionary is an imperialist; in Philippi, the missionary is of a conquered race, and it is his converts who are the imperialists. Curiously enough, even the little church there is born with an imperialist tinge in the house of Lydia, a seller of the imperial purple. As for the missionary, he was just a laborer, a maker of tents.

Look back then and imagine the apostle, the pioneer to Europe, as he steps ashore at the port of Neapolis. The account is in Acts, ch. 16, where the narrative suddenly switches to the first person, indicating that Luke had joined the party there. He was eager, perhaps, to show Paul his hometown, for some think that Luke was born in Philippi.

So the little missionary party hurries over the coastal ridge to the city nine miles away, with its Greek town stretching along the hills and the Roman colony spreading across the plain. Perhaps they passed a grove of trees where the river ran outside the city and where a small group of Jews met on the Sabbath for prayer. There a few days later the Lord opened Lydia's heart. "It was in green pastures and beside still waters that St. Paul won his first European convert," observes James Hastings (in the *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 2, p. 215). And she was a woman. The "man of Macedonia" turned out to be a woman!

The Women in Philippi

The church in Philippi is unique in the New Testament for the place occupied there by women. It is clear witness to the fact that from the beginning the Christian faith moved toward the emancipation of women. The first believer in Philippi was a businesswoman. (Acts 16: 14.) The first open demonstration of Christian power there was the deliverance of a slave girl. (Vs. 16-18.) Ten years later, when Paul writes to the church, two of the only three leaders in the church mentioned by name are women (Phil. 4: 2), and he specifically notes the help that women had been to him in this the beginning of the Christian mission to the West (ch. 4: 3).

The Letter

For anyone who likes neat outlines constructed around a central, unifying theme, Philippians is going to be a disappointment. It is not an essay, like Romans or Hebrews. It is pure letter—warm, personal, repetitious, and like some sermons, twice as long as it starts out to be. Paul finishes his letter in ch. 2 (as we divide it). He begins ch. 3 with "Finally," and then goes on for

two more chapters. He writes seven verses in ch. 4, says "Finally" again, and goes on for twice as many more verses. Even after he has said "Amen" (ch. 4: 20), he cannot stop but adds a three-verse postscript.

Analytically, the letter divides into six main sections:

1. *Greetings and prayer* for the Philippians (ch. 1: 1-11).
2. Then the subject shifts to *Paul's situation in Rome* (ch. 1: 12-26).
3. His thought turns back to Philippi with an *appeal for unity* (chs. 1: 27 to 2: 18).
4. Again in Rome, he tells of *his future plans* (ch. 2: 19-30).
5. To Philippi once more, *warnings and appeals* (chs. 3: 1 to 4: 8).
6. *Thanks for the gift* from Philippi (ch. 4: 9-23).

But we will divide the letter a little differently and outline it as follows:

PHILIPPIANS: AN OUTLINE

- I. The Joys of Partnership (ch. 1: 1-11)
 - A. Paul and His Partner: A Greeting (vs. 1-2)
 1. The partnership is for mission (v. 1)
 2. The partnership is in Christ (vs. 1-2)
 - B. Paul and His Partners: A Prayer (vs. 3-11)
 1. They were his joy in the past (vs. 3-5)
 2. They are his beloved friends now (vs. 7-8)
 3. He is confident of their future (vs. 6, 9-11)
- II. The Joys of Adversity (ch. 1: 12-30)
 - A. The Advantages of Opposition (vs. 12-18)
 1. Imprisonment can help the gospel (vs. 12-14)
 2. Even church division has its uses (vs. 15-18)
 - B. The Hope of Deliverance (vs. 19-26)
 1. Our hope is in Christ (vs. 19-21)
 2. Our deliverance is for others (vs. 22-26)
 - C. The Christians' Part in Victory (ch. 1: 27-30)
 1. Be moral (v. 27)
 2. Be united (v. 27)
 3. Be brave (v. 28)
 4. Accept suffering (v. 29)
 5. Be involved (v. 30)
- III. The Joys of Unity (ch. 2: 1-11)
 - A. The Call to Unity: Be One (vs. 1-2)
 - B. The Prerequisite of Unity: Be Humble (vs. 3-4)
 - C. The Secret of Unity: Be in Christ (vs. 5-11)
 1. The power is in Christ (v. 5)
 2. The example is Christ (vs. 6-11)

- IV. The Pursuit of Unity (ch. 2: 12-30)
 - A. The Responsibility of Unity (vs. 12-13)
 - B. The Marks of Responsibility (vs. 14-18)
 - C. Leadership for Unity (vs. 19-30)
 - 1. Timothy, the missionary partner (vs. 19-24)
 - 2. Epaphroditus, the local leader (vs. 25-30)

- V. Warnings Against Three Threats to Unity (ch. 3: 1-21)
 - A. Against Self-righteous Legalists (vs. 1-11)
 - 1. Rites are nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 1-3)
 - 2. Race is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 4-7)
 - 3. Our righteousness is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 8-11)
 - B. Against Self-satisfied Saints (vs. 12-16)
 - C. Against Self-serving Sinners (vs. 17-21)

- VI. Final Appeals for Joy and Unity in Christ (ch. 4: 1-23)
 - A. Appeal for Unity (vs. 1-3)
 - B. Appeal for Joy (vs. 4-7)
 - C. Concluding Remarks (vs. 8-23)
 - 1. The Christian's mind (vs. 8-9)
 - 2. The Christian's resources (vs. 10-23)

STUDY HELPS

1. Read together Acts, ch. 16.
What three segments of society were represented by the first converts in Philippi? What segments of society is your church reaching? Does it miss any? Why?
2. How did Paul and Timothy make use of Roman influences in Philippi for the advantage of the gospel? Applying this lesson to ourselves, list ways in which we might take advantage of social change in our own society for the sake of our revolutionary faith.
3. Review the reasons for Paul's great interest in Philippi. What can we learn from him in terms of strategic planning? Where are the most important centers for Christian mission in today's world?
4. List the reasons why our age is called "An Anxious Age." As you begin to read Philippians, jot down any Christian answers to these specific anxieties that you may find.
5. Locate and begin to familiarize yourselves with some of the following commentaries and study books (perhaps available in the church library):

William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (The Daily Study Bible).

Archibald M. Hunter, *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians* (The Layman's Bible Commentary, Vol. 22).
J. H. Michael, *Philippians* (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary).
Paul S. Rees, *The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians*.
Ernest F. Scott, "Philippians," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11.
Carroll E. Simcox, *They Met at Philippi*.

And some of the following Bible versions: The Revised Standard Version, J. B. Phillips' *The New Testament in Modern English*, *The New English Bible*, *The Moffatt Translation*, K. Taylor's *Living Letters*.

6. If you are interested in further information on the world of Paul's day, see Samuel Dill, *Roman Society: From Nero to Marcus Aurelius*; or S. Angus, *The Environment of Early Christianity*; or the Pelican paperback, R. H. Barrows, *The Romans* (esp. pp. 10-11, 59-69, 89-92, 179-184).

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. You will need a good concordance, or at least a Bible with a concordance included. Pick out the five most important Bible passages on joy, which you can find outside of Philippians.
2. If you have a topical concordance, see what you can find in the Bible about anxiety, fretfulness, worry.
3. Who are some of the important women mentioned by name in the New Testament church? What was the place of women in the life of the community of believers? Read Luke 1: 5-38; ch. 2: 36-38; ch. 10: 38-42; John 12: 3-8; Acts 9: 36-41; I Tim. 2: 9-14; II Tim. 3: 6-8; I Peter 3: 1-6. How do you reconcile what these passages say about women in the church with Paul's statement in I Cor. 14: 34?
4. Make your own outline of Phil., ch. 1.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT STUDY PERIOD

1. Read Philippians through at one sitting. If possible, read all four chapters every day for thirty days. Study in depth Phil. 1: 1-11.
2. Read the next chapter in the Study Guide.

THANK GOO FOR PARTNERS

Philippians 1:1-11

AS THE APOSTLE PAUL begins his last letter to his friends in the church at Philippi, three things soon became evident. He is very much concerned about something. He is absolutely committed to someone. And he is quite happy about almost everything. Such a mixture of concern, commitment, and joy is a remarkably fine combination of mental and spiritual attitudes for any Christian in any age.

At first, in his opening words of greeting, it is the note of commitment that dominates, but indirectly woven in is also something of the concern and the joy.

Philippians 1: 1-2—Slaves, Saints, and a Partner

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ . . . , to all the saints in Christ . . . at Philippi . . . : Grace . . . and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(NOTE: The text here and below will be condensed for quick reference and rapid sequence. Compare it with the full text in your Bible.)

1. The first strong word in the letter is "servant." Literally it means "slave," as if the first thing Paul wants to make dramatically clear is his *absolute commitment to Jesus Christ*. His letter is many things: a hymn of joy, a thank-you note, a love letter to a church, a lesson in missionary strategy, and an apostolic plea for Christian unity. But Paul begins where joy and thanksgiving and love and mission and unity must all begin. He begins with Jesus Christ.

Before he has so much as finished the first words of greeting, he has named the name of Christ three times and triple-stitched into the opening fabric of the epistle a monogram, as it were—a sign of the underlying secret of all that he wants to say to Philippi about unity and joy. So the letter opens with this rapid repetition of "the name," reminding the Philippians of three fundamental facts of the Christian life. J. H. Michael summarizes them thus: "Our relation *to* Christ ['servant of Christ']; our state *in* Christ ['saints in Christ'];

and our blessings *from* Christ [‘grace and peace from . . . the Lord Jesus Christ’].” Slavery, sainthood, and blessings may be a singularly unattractive blend of ideas to most modern readers, but everything that Paul is about to say to the Philippians is rooted in a right understanding of those three words.

The *slavery* of which Paul speaks is not the abject, crawling thing that human masters make of it. Paul’s only “slavery” is absolute obedience to and total possession by Jesus Christ, his Lord and God. It is complete selflessness and utter loyalty. This is the slavery that makes men free. In the Old Testament it brought men to their feet before kings as “servants of God,” and prophets. “The Christian man,” said Luther, “is most free lord of all, and servant to none; the Christian man is most dutiful servant of all and subject to everyone.”

The *sainthood* (literally, “holiness”) of which Paul speaks is not the stained-glass window kind. “Saint” is the ordinary New Testament word for Christian. It means “holy” but not “holier than thou.” It is a little more like an honorary degree than an earned one, in that it does not imply a perfection achieved, but a position bestowed and a responsibility to be kept. That position is “in Christ,” which is Paul’s key phrase in the description of what it means to be a Christian. Its meaning will become more clear as it recurs throughout this letter. Here he calls the Philippians “saints” not because he thinks they are without fault—he will soon be rebuking them for some of their shortcomings—but because when they are “in Christ,” Christ’s holiness begins to be theirs.

The *blessings* are *grace and peace*. Here Paul makes a beautiful new Christian greeting out of the common Greek salutation, “Grace,” and the old Hebrew greeting, “Peace.” But more important, he sums up in those two short words the joy and power of a new faith that breaks down the barriers between Jew and Greek. *Grace* is not the languid, rather effete, word that we make of it today. Basically, it is the undeserved favor that God shows to man. It is God’s “active love,” as P. T. Forsyth puts it. There is power in it: God’s power for man’s weakness. And there is joy in it: God’s joy for man’s sorrow. The result is *peace*, which is all from God, for no man has joy and peace and power from himself.

2. Not so obvious in these opening verses, but very much on the apostle’s mind, as later parts of the letter will show, is his *concern for the unity of the church*. The first hint of it, perhaps, is a faint stress on the word “all.” Paul has had word of divisions among the Christians at Philippi, but he plays no favorites. He reminds them that they are all one in Christ, and greets “all the saints in Christ . . . at Philippi.”

The theme of unity is introduced in another and particularly graceful way by Paul’s first three words: “Paul and Timothy. . . .” It was Paul’s letter, not Timothy’s, but with these first words the old pioneer lifts up his junior missionary colleague into full partnership and commends him to the church. He

guards against any opening wedge of division between the older and younger generations. Paul is Christ's slave, and Timothy's partner.

Philippians 1: 3-11—Completing the Partnership

I thank . . . God in all my remembrance of you, . . . making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. . . . I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion. . . . I hold you in my heart. . . . I yearn for you all. . . . And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and . . . discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and . . . be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through . . . Christ.

In the words of greeting (vs. 1-2), Paul made clear his relation to Timothy his partner, and to Christ his Lord. Now, beginning with v. 3, he makes equally clear his relationship to the Christians at Philippi. They are not just converts and followers. As surely as Timothy, they too are his partners in mission, and the thought moves him to words that are lyric with joy and affection. The past, the present, and the future all move across his mind as he prays for them.

1. *The past fills him with joy* (vs. 3-5). "I thank my God . . . with joy, . . . for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now," he writes. The King James Version has "fellowship in the gospel," but the Revised Standard Version is better, for what moves Paul to joy is the memory of "their common participation with him in spreading the gospel" (*Expositor's Greek Testament*). For a missionary like Paul there is no greater joy than when the convert becomes a partner.

My father, who was a pioneer in Korea, singled out as his moment of most intense joy on the mission field the day he commissioned the first Korean to volunteer for missionary service. Sixteen years earlier, entering North Korea, he had faced a mob in the streets of Pyongyang. Out of the back alleys they poured to stone the "foreign devil." One of the men who tried to kill him that day was a young tough named Yi Kui-Poong. Sixteen years later, in 1907, father found himself facing Yi Kui-Poong again. This time it was at the first meeting of the first presbytery of the new Korean Presbyterian Church, and father, as the moderator, was about to commission its first missionary—Yi Kui-Poong, who had been converted, trained, and was now ordained for mission on remote Quelpart Island. We call this a "new day in mission," as the younger churches join with us in full partnership in the work of reaching the whole inhabited earth for Christ. But it is not new. It is a pattern as old as Philippi.

What was Philippi's "partnership in the gospel"? Paul refers to it again at the end of his letter. "When I left Macedonia," he says (ch. 4: 15-16), "no

church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only; for even in Thessalonica you sent me help." The Philippian church was not only the first in Europe, historically and geographically, insofar as we have record; it was also the first to move from the receiving to the giving stage. It supported Paul financially.

2. *The present is full of love* (vs. 7-9). We would expect a man in prison to be praying to get out, but not Paul. His prayer is filled not with the anxieties of the moment but with its blessings. Where we would pray, "Help, Lord, I have problems," Paul prays, "Thank you, Lord, I have love." An undercurrent of deep affection between Paul and the Philippian Christians ripples its way all through the letter. The words almost trip over each other, as twice in as many verses Paul tells the Philippians how he loves them: "I hold you in my heart" (v. 7); "How I yearn for you" (v. 8). It would all be shallow and excessively sentimental did not the apostle reveal the deeps from which his love wells up: the grace of God (v. 7), and the love of Christ (v. 8). Partnership in grace sweetens the partnership of work with love. And, as another apostle put it, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (I John 4: 18). Love is one of the best Christian answers to anxiety.

3. *The future is sure* (vs. 6, 10-11). The future holds no more anxiety for Paul than the past or the present. "I am sure that he who began a good work in you," he writes, "will bring it to completion." But just how realistic was Paul's confidence? Where is the church in Philippi today? Ten feet underground! I have seen pictures of the plain of Philippi: tumbling wall, a heap of stones where archaeologists have scratched away the dust of centuries, a column standing bare and broken against a line of snowy hills. That is all. There is no church left.

We spoke of Communist myths, in the first chapter of this guide; there are Christian myths as well. One of them is that churches cannot be destroyed; that however fierce their persecutors may be, God's promise stands firm, "The gates of hell shall not prevail." That promise is true, but it must not be interpreted naïvely and unbiblically. It is a misunderstanding both of God's promise and of Paul's confidence to imagine that any church anywhere is indestructible. God's promise is to the church, the whole church, not to individual churches, and like the sign of Noah's rainbow, though it stands as assurance against total disaster, it is no guarantee of local immunity. There have been many floods since Noah's day, and many churches have been wiped out since our Lord made his promise to his church. It happened to Philippi, and it can happen again.

Was the apostle's confidence, then, nothing but wishful thinking? Not at all. His confidence is in the One who began the good work, in Jesus Christ, not in those in whom the work is done. He loves the Philippians, but he knows better than to put his hope for the future in any man. The future belongs to God. The church in Philippi may be gone, but the church of God has circled the world.

There is, however, a hint in history that even the Philippian church did not disappear without first playing its part in mission and in victory. Origen, writing about one hundred and fifty years after Paul's death, says that the Clement mentioned in Phil. 4: 3 is Clement of Rome. This may well not be so, for Clement was a common name and we have only Origen's word for it five generations after the fact. But I like to think that Origen may be right, and that the little church in Philippi, firstfruits of Paul's mission to Europe, took its partnership with him in that mission so seriously that when at last the great apostle laid down his life a martyr for the gospel in Rome, his beloved Philippians sent Clement from their small number to take his place. Clement, a missionary, "whose name is in the book of life," was writer of the earliest Christian document known outside the New Testament, Clement's *Letter to the Corinthians*. What a fitting answer to Paul's confidence that "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion," and to his prayer "that your love may abound . . . filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through . . . Christ, to the glory . . . of God."

Note the last words. At the end, as at the beginning, Paul's confidence for the future rests not in his partners but in his Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is Paul's definition of a saint? (See Rom. 1: 7; I Cor. 1: 2; Eph. 4: 12; II Thess. 1: 10.) How does that compare to the popular use of the word today?
2. What three "unities" do you find in the first two verses?
3. What is the difference between "concern" and "anxiety"?
4. Barclay points out ten kinds of joy that are described in Philippians: the joy of Christian prayer, the joy that Jesus Christ is preached, etc. Begin to spot the reference and make your own list, as our study continues.
5. How often does Paul repeat the words "you all" in this section? What does this suggest?
6. In what sense will God bring to completion his good work in us, not only as a body of believers but also as individuals?
7. As Paul turns from song to supplication in v. 9, what kind of love is he referring to? What does the word "abound" mean? What is the implication in this prayer that their love may abound *more and more*? See Rom. 5: 5.
8. What is the significance in Paul's prayer that their love may also be rich in knowledge and all discernment? Note the balance between love and

enlightenment. Is there a difference between love and sentimentalism? How, in Matt. 9: 27-31, for example, did a natural and good reaction become the enemy of the best?

9. What are the fruits of righteousness? (See Gal. 5: 22-23.) See if you can, by contrast, name some of the fruits of self-righteousness.
10. Look up information on "partnership in mission" and today's changing missionary patterns.

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. Meaning depends on grammatical structure as well as on vocabulary. Note the importance of the connectives in this passage. Pick out these connectives and study the meaning and flow of thought in the passage as revealed by them; e.g., the "and" in v. 1; "to," v. 1; "with," v. 1; "inasmuch," in v. 7 (KJV); "that," v. 10. What do the connectives tell us about the difference between "approve what is excellent" in Phil. 1: 10 and the same phrase in Rom. 2: 17 f.?
2. There are two references to the "day of Christ" in this section. What does Paul mean by the phrase? See I Thess. 3: 12-13; Matt. 24: 29 ff.; I Cor. 15: 24-25; Rev. 11: 15; John 6: 38 ff.
3. For a good ecclesiastical debate, investigate why Presbyterians derive comfort from the reference to bishops (plural) in Phil. 1: 1. See also Titus 1: 5-7, and Bishop Lightfoot's commentary, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, on this verse, pp. 193 f.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 1: 12-30.
2. Read Acts, chs. 21 to 28.
3. Read Chapter 3 in the Study Guide.

THE JOYS OF ADVERSITY

Philippians 1:12-30

THE FIRST PARAGRAPHS of Paul's letter have been full of normal joy in work to do, and the friends and partners with whom to do it. But Paul's situation was not normal as the Philippians knew very well. In fact, they were so concerned about him that they had sent one of their church members, Epaphroditus, to see what could be done about his desperate position.

But Paul turns the tables on them. Epaphroditus had come to comfort *him*; now he sends him back with this letter to comfort *them*. (Phil. 2: 25-30.) It seems that they are far more anxious than he is. He is in prison, but he is deliriously happy. He uses the word "joy" or "rejoice" over and over again—thirteen times in this one short letter.

Some may have thought him more delirious than happy. Anyone can rejoice in friendship and love and a chance to work; it is quite another thing to rejoice in adversity. How can he be serious? He says first, for example (in vs. 15-18), that he rejoices about the situation he faces in Rome. But he is under lock and key, and outside his cell in the city of Rome the church has split in two with anxious, rival evangelists preaching only to cause Paul more trouble. "So I rejoice," he says. It seems absurd.

Second (in vs. 19-26), he rejoices at the prospect of deliverance from prison. This would make more sense, except that the odds were already turning ominously against him. It is impossible to know exactly the date when Paul wrote this passage, but it was probably about the time of the death of Burrhus, commander of the Praetorian Guard. Burrhus was the last *good* commander of the guard under Nero. He may have been responsible for Paul's rather lenient treatment up to that time. But when Burrhus died, a tiger took his place, the hated Tigellinus, debaucher of the emperor's own sisters and the worst of Nero's creatures. So with Burrhus dead or about to die, Paul's best chances of freedom were already gone. Yet he wrote, "I shall rejoice."

Joy under such circumstances was madness. But Paul was not "under the circumstances," he was "in Christ"; and when life closes in, as Paul now explains to the Philippians, the difference between despair and hope is Christ. Perhaps, as he writes, his mind goes back ten years, and he remembers that there was a prison in Philippi once too. They had tried to keep a missionary

there, a missionary who refused to act like a prisoner, who refused to recognize defeat, who sang songs in the night. And after the hymns, and after the earthquake, it was the prison-keeper, not the prisoner, who tried to commit suicide. And it was the prisoner, not the prison-keeper, who opened the doors—the doors to eternal life.

Philippians 1: 12-18—Profiting from Opposition

I want you to know . . . that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known . . . to all . . . that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made . . . much more bold to speak the word of God. . . . Some indeed preach Christ from envy . . . , not sincerely . . . thinking to afflict me . . . , but others from good will . . . out of love. . . . What then? . . . Whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and . . . I rejoice.

Kierkegaard remarks in *Works of Love*: "For practical purposes, it is at the hopeless moment that we require the hopeful man. . . . Exactly where hope ceases to be reasonable, it begins to be useful." (Quoted in "Philippians," *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11, p. 35.) That almost describes Paul in prison, but not quite. Kierkegaard is a bit too much of an irrationalist. Not Paul. There is nothing unreasonable about his joy. His joy was Christ.

1. *He rejoices in imprisonment because of Christ* (vs. 12-14). Why? Because his arrest, which was supposed to be a setback to the cause, instead has suddenly focused attention on the faith and all at once the name of Christ is being heard everywhere in Rome. Christianity thrives on opposition. "The blood of the martyrs," said Tertullian centuries ago, "is the seed of the church," and it is still true today as the Communists begrudgingly admit. "Religion is like a nail," complained the Russian, Lunacharski. "The harder you hit it, the deeper you drive it into the wood."

2. Unfortunately not all the opposition was coming from outside the church. Yet *Paul can rejoice even in church division because of Christ* (vs. 15-18). It may come as a shock to find the apostle in this passage virtually condoning separatism and rejoicing in the splintering of the sects. The truth, of course, is that it was not the division that made him glad. The secret of his joy was his supreme confidence in his Lord whose name, when preached even in faction and church partisanship, speaks with such compelling power that it can convert and save.

This passage was a comfort to John Calvin during the distressing divisions of the Reformation. No one worked harder than he to heal those divisions, but he failed. Refusing to be discouraged, however, he took heart from Paul's example at Rome and wrote in his commentary on these verses, "Hearing that that impure dog, Carolus, was scattering the seeds of pure doctrine, [we, like

Paul] gave thanks to God because he had made use of that most profligate and worthless villain for his glory." There is a little too much gritting of the teeth at the opposition, perhaps in the old Reformer, but at least he had found the secret of Christian joy even in the midst of division.

Philippians 1: 19-26—Alive or Dead—Christ's!

Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of . . . Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, . . . and . . . now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. . . . My desire is to depart and be with Christ. . . . But to remain . . . is more necessary on your account. . . . [So] I shall remain . . . , for your progress and joy . . . , that in me you may . . . glory in Christ.

Paul's third reason for joy is his hope of deliverance. This would seem to require less explanation than his joy in imprisonment and his joy in division, but it is not quite what it seems. True, he speaks of coming to Philippi again (v. 26), but he is too much of a realist not to know that his only release from prison may be the deliverance of death. He is, however, magnificently unconcerned. The three great passions of his life have utterly obliterated all concern for himself. These are his love for Christ, his love for others, and his love for his work.

1. *Christ comes first.* He is the key to all joy in adversity. In one of the greatest verses in the whole Bible, Paul puts it thus: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (v. 21). There is a modern echo of that apostolic affirmation in the words of a Korean martyr shot by the Communists. Unshakable to the end, he said simply to his murderers, "Alive or dead I am Jesus Christ's man." When a man is "in Christ," nothing in life or in death can change the relationship or shake the position. Then life loses its anxieties and death all its terrors. The man who is not prepared to die, someone has remarked, is not prepared to live.

2. Paul's second passion in life was *his love for others*. He is so busy caring for them he has no time to worry about himself. Verse 20 suggests that a pronouncement of death has come to him, but immediately he is more concerned about what this may mean to his friends than about what it will mean to him. So with exquisite grace he prepares them for any eventuality. He would be glad to die, he assures the Philippians, for death would only bring him nearer to the Lord he loves. Only his love and his feeling of continued responsibility for them makes life preferable to death. Whatever lies ahead of him, therefore, he will accept with joy. The future frightens only the man or woman who lives for himself.

3. The third passion of Paul's life is *his work*. So great was his joy in it (v. 22) that not even the frustrating interruptions of arrest and imprisonment

could annoy him for long. He could move no farther than his chain, but he was forever planning ahead, mapping out new missionary journeys. The next one, he says (v. 26), will bring him through Philippi. But like any good general, Paul has alternative plans. What if he is not released? In that case, says Paul, in the final paragraph of this first chapter, the battle is up to you Philippians.

Philippians 1: 27-30—Getting Into the Fight

Only let your . . . life be worthy of . . . Christ . . . whether I come . . . or [not]. . . Stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith . . . , and not frightened . . . by your opponents. This is a clear omen . . . of their destruction. . . For . . . you should not only believe in him [Christ] but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which . . . [is] mine.

Paul has just told the Philippians that the hope of the future is in Christ. It is no real help, however, to anxious, troubled people to throw a Christian truth at them, and tell them that if they will only believe it all will be well. Christian victory is not won by platitudes, and Christian truth must be *put* to work or it *won't* work. So Paul does not let truth wither away into platitudes for lack of application. Having revealed the secret of victory, Christ, he goes right on to point out that the Christian must play his own part in that victory.

He is writing to a soldier's town and he puts it in vivid military language. He tells the troops to shape up, close ranks, be men, endure hardship, and engage the enemy. The stress is on five important Christian duties:

1. *Right conduct* ("let your manner of life be worthy"). There is no room in the Christian life for orthodoxy without ethics. More than one church has been split by Christians trying to excuse themselves for ethical lapses by their theological orthodoxy. Paul would not tolerate such a travesty of the faith. He says as clearly as James that "faith without works is dead" (KJV). The progress of thought in all his letters runs directly from doctrine to conduct.

2. *Unity* ("one spirit . . . one mind"). This is the first direct plea for unity in the letter, but it will become the central theme in the next chapter, and it was implicit in this chapter from the first "and" of the first verse. Paul had conceded in vs. 15-18 above that factionalism cannot destroy the gospel. Now he begins to qualify that concession. It is no less true, he reminds the Philippians, among whom some signs of discord were appearing, that Christian unity is imperative for Christian victory. Division cannot defeat, but it can prevent victory.

3. *Courage* ("not frightened . . . by your opponents"). The courage spoken of here is probably courage of conviction, not physical courage. Open per-

secution had not yet begun. But Philippi was an idol-worshiping town, and the opponents referred to were in all probability idol worshipers demanding compromises from the "one-God" Christians. "Stand firm for your convictions," Paul tells his people. Ethics without orthodoxy is as wrong as orthodoxy without ethics.

4. *Suffering*. Paul makes no empty promises of easy, bargain-rate salvation. As it took Christ's suffering for us to win us our salvation, so it should come as no surprise if we are called upon to suffer for him. With characteristic resilience Paul looks on this kind of suffering as a gift, not a burden. "It has been *granted* to you . . . [to] suffer." (V. 29.)

5. *Involvement* ("engaged in . . . conflict"). Twice in this paragraph the apostle indicates that the Christian life is not withdrawal from the world but involvement in it. In the plea for right conduct in v. 27, the verb literally means "be worthy citizens," or in other words, "take your right place in civic affairs." That is the positive side. Christians are to stand up and be counted in community action for justice and order and right. There is also a negative side. Like Paul, we may be drawn into conflict and suffering. This is not to be shunned as unchristian. It is part of the engagement, the involvement. The long line of Christian involvement in history runs straight from Philippi to Selma.

Phillips paraphrases the last verse of the chapter thus: "It is now your turn to take part in that battle you once saw me engaged in." Paul knows he is nearing the end of his fight, and like an old soldier turning over the command, he writes this last letter to his partners, the Philippians. It is part of the joy of struggle, and part of our hope of victory, that there are those who will carry on where we leave off.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature of the opposition encountered by Paul and what use does he make of it in developing his message in ch. 1?
2. Look up some other Bible references that teach us that a Christian lives above the circumstances. (For example, John 16: 16-20; James 1: 2. Find others.)
3. If you were writing a paper on Phil. 1: 15-18, what title would you use?
4. What does Paul mean when he says in ch. 1: 19, "For I know that . . . this will turn out for my deliverance"? What does the word "this" refer to? What kind of deliverance is he expecting?
5. Paul seems to have a conviction that the prayers of the saints are one of the two factors in his deliverance. What other evidence is there in Scrip-

ture for the importance that God places on believers' prayer for the achievement of divine purpose?

6. There are prisons of the mind as well as of the body. To what fears, jealousies, and opposition in present-day America does Paul speak?
7. What kind of practical involvement are Christians called into today?

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. How did Paul happen to be in prison in the first place? (Refer back to Acts, chs. 21 to 28.)
2. What was the Praetorian Guard? (Phil. 1: 13.) See also ch. 4: 22. What does it indicate about the spread of the gospel?
3. Write your own paraphrase of ch. 1: 19-30.
4. Make a study of what the Bible means by "suffering for his sake" (v. 29). See Matt. 16: 24; II Tim. 2: 12; II Cor. 4:17; Heb. 11: 25; I Peter 4: 1; etc.
5. The vital interrelationship of orthodoxy and ethics in Paul's teaching is emphatic. Separating them and emphasizing either the one or the other has resulted in a number of dangerous trends in the church through the centuries and even in our time. Find out what some of these are.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 2: 1-11.
2. Read Chapter 4 in the Study Guide.

A MIND FOR JOY

Philippians 2:1-11

PAUL NOW COMES to the heart of his letter. His call to battle, to involvement, and to mission in the closing paragraphs of the first chapter leads him inevitably to a call to unity; for mission demands unity, and unity proceeds out of mission.

Bishop Azariah, the saintly evangelist of South India and the first Indian ever to become an Anglican bishop, tells of an interview he had with Dr. Ambedkar, leader of India's untouchable millions, the *harijans*, the outcastes. It was back in 1935. Dr. Ambedkar was about to forsake Hinduism. "Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease," he had said. Bishop Azariah hoped he would bring his millions into the Christian faith. "Your people, deeply religious, cannot live without a religion," said the bishop. "It is not enough to give up Hinduism. They must have something else." He offered them Christianity. Dr. Ambedkar replied: "I am well aware of all that the Christian church has done for the outcastes, but we Harijans are one community all over India, and our strength is in our unity. Can you in the Christian church offer us any unity comparable to that?" And the bishop was silent.

Since Christian mission so often demands unity for evangelistic effectiveness, it is no accident that Paul the missionary writes to Philippi pleading for unity. But he begins with a more personal plea. Your unity is my joy, he writes, so "fill up my cup of happiness" (*The New English Bible*), "complete my joy" (RSV), and he one. A mind for joy is one mind in Christ.

Philippians 2: 1-2—The Call to Unity

If there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love,
... complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same
love.

Just what it was in Philippi that called for this appeal we can only conjecture. Perhaps it was a personal quarrel between two members of the church, as the reference in Phil. 4: 2 seems to indicate. It was not doctrinal division as in Galatia, or moral weakness as in Corinth, but rather, some form of jealousy or personal ambition. To check such lack of concord before it

breaks into open schism, Paul writes this moving appeal for harmony. He bases his appeal on two great cornerstones.

1. *Union in Christ.* Again that important phrase appears, *in Christ*. "If there is any encouragement in Christ . . ." He begins with Christ and bases his whole appeal for unity on the actual union of the believer with the body of Christ. "Union with Christ," Paul is saying, "demands unity in Christian life." Appeals to church unity that begin anywhere else but with "union in Christ" are rootless and baseless.

2. *Love.* "If . . . any incentive of love . . ." The first appeal is objective, our union in Christ; the second is warmly subjective. It is an appeal to that sympathetic love of the brethren which is characteristic of real Christians. Love is the best word to describe the Christian God. He is love. Love is the best word to describe the Christian religion; it is love of God. And love is the best word to describe the Christian way of life; it is love of our fellowmen.

Unity in the church, then, is built on these two cornerstones: our union in Christ, and our love for one another. If either of these is missing, we cannot say we love God and we are not rightly in the church at all. (I John 4: 16-20.) The rest of v. 2 only repeats the lesson in other words. "Participation in the Spirit" is another description of "union in Christ"; and "affection" and "sympathy" are aspects of love. These expressions of love are the foundations of unity in the church.

But what about doctrine? Is that not also basic to union? Yes, but it is dangerous to try to read too much into any one passage. Paul is not talking about church reunion after a schism. He is, rather, forestalling a division. He is talking to a single congregation, undivided by heresies, and the basis of unity in such a group is precisely as he describes it: oneness in Christ, and love toward one another. Given these two basics, it is for Christians to "live together in harmony [and] live together in love, as though [they] had only one mind and one spirit between [them]" (Phil. 2: 2, Phillips).

That is easier said than done. How are Christians actually to work out such happy harmony? Having told the Philippians what to do, Paul now proceeds to tell them how to do it.

Philippians 2: 3-4—The Prerequisite of Unity

Do nothing from selfishness . . . , but in humility count others better than yourselves. . . . Look not only to . . . [your] own interests, but also to the interests of others.

This is the second step in Paul's appeal. First, be united. Second, if you want to be united, be humble. This is what the church should be like, a com-

munity where nothing is done in selfishness or conceit, but where in humility each thinks more of others than he does of himself. "A marvellous community," exclaims one commentator, Lenski, "in which no one is looked down upon, but every one looked up to."

But how often humility, which is the indispensable ingredient in Christian living, becomes the missing ingredient in the way we actually live. "When I look back upon my own religious experience," says Andrew Murray in his little book *Humility*, "or round upon the Church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at the thought of how *little* humility is sought after as the distinguishing feature of discipleship of Jesus. . . . Alas, how much proof there is that humility is not esteemed the cardinal virtue, the only root from which the graces grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus. . . . Meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief marks by which those who follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God are known."

I wonder how much of the tension between churches, and between Christians, or between Christians and non-Christians, is caused by this lack of humility in Christians. I was badly jolted one day when a Korean said to me: "You Americans are always so proud. And even if you weren't, I wouldn't believe it, because if I had all you had I'd be proud myself." If that is the handicap we work against, how much harder we must strive to be humble.

Again, easier said than done. We cannot go around muttering fiercely to ourselves: "Be humble. Be humble." It does not work. If humility is so necessary, if it really is the mark of discipleship and the secret of unity in the church, then what in the world is the secret of humility, for that is the secret we need.

Paul once found himself in just such a cycle of frustration. He described it to the Romans: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7: 15, 18, 24). But the answer comes at once, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7: 25). The answer is always Christ. The secret of humility is Christ. "Be united," Paul urges. "How?" we ask. "Be humble," he replies. "How?" "Be in Christ," says Paul as he now begins to unfold the final secret of unity and joy.

Philippians 2: 5-11—The Secret of Unity

Have this mind . . . in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. . . . He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name

which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This great passage is the glory of the letter. It is a description of the humility that *can* be ours when we are in Christ, who is both the power and the example for our pursuit of that elusive virtue.

1. *The power* (v. 5). The usual interpretation of this difficult verse is to take it as an appeal to the example of Jesus Christ. That is the sense of the King James Version, and that sense is not at all foreign to this passage. The example is there, as we shall see. But the example is not enough. It has been pointed out by a theologian in India that the example of Christ is not an ordinary Pauline pattern of thought. M. Hollis writes, "[Paul] does not argue that Christians can do something because Jesus has done it, in the sense that what man has done man can do." He is more radical and dynamic than that. What Paul says over and over again is that Christians can do what was before impossible because they are "in Christ," new men in Christ. "The humanly impossible [humility, unity] is possible because they are in Christ." ("A Further Note on Philipians 2: 5," in *The Indian Journal of Theology*, VII, p. 4.)

The New English Bible translates the verse, "Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus." In other words, let your mutual relationships be governed not by your natural minds, your old nature, but by the new nature, the mind which is yours *in Christ*. The power is in him. It becomes ours when we are in him.

2. *The example* (vs. 6-11). This is one of the most profound Christological passages in the whole Bible, but Paul uses it not to teach theology, so much, as to teach a very practical truth about Christian living in a very practical situation. It is a lofty passage used to teach a lowly truth, humility.

It may also be the very first Christian hymn. The style stands out sharply from the casual manner of the rest of the letter. Every phrase is measured, every word exact and balanced. To catch the flavor of the original, read Milton, not the Bible's English prose.

"That glorious Form, that Light insufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heavn's high Council-Table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksom House of mortal Clay."

"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity."

It is more than a hymn, however, it is a three-point sermon on the person

and work of Jesus Christ. First Paul sweeps us back to the beginning of time for an exceedingly rare glimpse of Christ before he came to earth, the pre-existent Christ. Next he focuses on the hinge of history, the incarnation. Finally he moves on majestically to the end of time and Christ's exaltation. Why all this just to teach humility?

a. *The preexistent Christ* (v. 6). Paul begins with Christ before he came to earth because it is this that gives *ethical* meaning to the example. It is precisely because Christ *was* God that his becoming a man and a servant had meaning. There is no humility in a man being a man, or a servant being a servant. There is even less humility in a man becoming God as some modern heresies about Christ would have it.

Christ was God. That is where Paul begins. "He [Christ] was in the form of God," he writes. It is only in the English that his language is ambiguous. The Greeks had two separate words for form. One refers to outer, changing shapes, as when "a cloud takes the *form* of a mountain" (*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 11, p. 48). That is not the one used here. Paul uses the other word, *morphē*, which is the kind of form that expresses what the object really is. If Christ has the form of God in this sense, then God is what he really is. Phillips translates it, "He who had always been God by nature."

b. *The incarnate Christ* (vs. 7-8). He who had always been God . . . *became man*. The Lord of Glory took "the form of a servant"—once again the word "form," though Paul uses the weaker word here, the word for "outer shape." This in no way implies a "reverse unitarianism," that is, that Jesus was not really a man but was just God masquerading like a man. There are some branches of the Coptic Church, which do in this way virtually deny the real humanity of Christ, but they have become isolated, introverted, superstitious, and selfish—an object lesson on what will happen to any church that forgets that God really did become a servant. It simply ceases to be relevant. The deity of Christ makes the humiliation *ethical*; the incarnation makes it *relevant*. This is why, in 1956, a committee of the World Presbyterian Alliance, meeting in Prague to choose a theme for the 18th General Council in São Paulo that would be as relevant to Christians on one side of the Curtain as the other, finally picked out this passage. They linked it with Isa., ch. 53, and John, ch. 13, and chose as the theme for the Quadrennium, "The Servant Lord and His Servant People."

What does it take to become a "servant people"? Will giving up our luxuries do it? When the Communists rolled over us in Peking, knowing what propaganda use they made of our "capitalist affluence," we tried to simplify our living standards. One of the most warmhearted missionaries I have ever known outdid us all. He got rid of his furniture, his rugs; he ate the simplest of food, wore his oldest clothes. When the first Communist soldier came into the house, Hal welcomed him into the bare rooms. "We are here to serve, not to exploit," he tried to indicate. The little soldier smiled and looked at his shoes. That was all; he just looked at his shoes. And Hal finally looked down

at his shoes too and his heart sank. His were leather; the soldier was wearing frayed old canvas tennis shoes.

It is not the things we give up that count for humility. Humility is in the heart. We need not argue too much, therefore, about what it was that Christ emptied himself of, in Phil. 2: 7. His glory? His omnipotence? Paul would brush all that aside as idle speculation. "He emptied *himself*," is what Paul says. He poured himself out in utter self-sacrifice for us, as water is poured from a vase; and at the end he died for us.

This was the climax of humiliation, the cross (v. 8). In Philippians, the phrase "death on a cross" takes on a specially moving intensity. For Paul was a Roman. The Philippians to whom he was writing were Romans, too, citizens of a colony with special Roman rights. Neither Paul nor the Philippians could ever be sentenced to death by crucifixion. It was too humiliating a death for a Roman. But not too humiliating for our Servant Lord. What an example! He suffered for the Philippians a death they could never be asked to suffer for him. And what does he ask in return? Humility. It is as important as that, this secret of unity.

c. *The exalted Christ* (vs. 9-11). First the cross; then the crown. After the climax of humiliation comes a climax of joy, as the final section of Paul's picture of the whole Christ falls into place. It is as if Paul had chosen to paint the picture as a triptych, a great three-paneled screen. Note the curious construction. Two of the panels are shining gold, while the center panel, which is in the place of honor, is made of wood, old blackened wood, at that, the wood of a cross. On the first side is the preexistent Christ in glory: gold and ivory. In the center is the incarnation: "out of the ivory palaces" to death on a wooden cross. But the third panel is shining gold again: the exaltation, which is Christ's reward.

Reward is a dangerous thought to add to an appeal to humility. Rewards can corrupt humility and destroy unity and turn joy into sorrow more quickly than any persecution. Some, therefore, have gone so far as to say that the idea of reward does not belong in the Christian faith. They are usually against punishment too. But there is no such unreal world. Rewards and punishments are facts of life. Of course they can be misused. So can food and sex and liberty and love. The answer to their abuse is not their abolition but their proper use.

When God rewards, the reward is just. It is not self-sought or self-bestowed. Quite the opposite. Christ came to suffer, not to be exalted. "Christ emptied Christ," observes J. A. Bengel (*Gnomon of the New Testament*, Vol. 4, p. 134); "God exalted Christ." The Lord came to be a servant; *therefore* he has been made Lord.

He has been given, also, "the name which is above every name" (v. 9). Even in non-Christian lands, where the Christian faith is sharply attacked and the

church is often persecuted, men are usually careful not to criticize the name of Jesus. The Communists try to use the name rather than attack it. Their propagandists labor to capture Jesus for the revolution. "He was a carpenter's son," they say, "a workingman, the first martyr of the revolution, crucified by the imperialists." There is still such power in the name that even the enemy tries to borrow something of its power.

And we who bear the name, how much of its power do we carry?

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the three great causes of discord and disunity suggested by Phil. 2: 3-4?
2. People who are most in earnest about their beliefs are sometimes most prone to factionalism. Why? Does Paul, therefore, call for reduced conviction and commitment as an aid to unity? Name four or five considerations or appeals set down by Paul for the prevention of disharmony.
3. The early Christians had a one-sentence creed. See if you can construct a brief creed of your own from ch. 2: 5-11.
4. What is humility? Hitler said it was no virtue at all but a weakening vice. How would you answer him?
5. Jesus is called the Servant Lord. What does the paradox mean? Why are both sides of the paradox important?
6. What does Christian service require of us?
7. What is the difference between Christ as power and Christ as example?

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. Make a study of specific examples of Christ's humility in the Gospels. (Matt. 11: 29; Luke 2: 4-7; v. 51; Matt. 13: 55; Luke 9: 58; Matt. 9: 10-11; ch. 20: 28; John 13: 5; and many others.)
2. Where is Christ's deity most clearly taught in the Bible? See, for example: Heb. 1: 3-6; Col. 2: 9; John 14: 9; Matt. 1: 23; John 1: 1; ch. 20: 28; I Tim. 3: 16. Find others.
3. Where is Christ's humanity most clearly taught? Begin with Matt. 13: 55; John 1: 14; Gal. 4: 4; I Tim. 2: 5.

4. For a more thorough study of the meaning of the key phrase, "in Christ," read James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ*, especially Ch. IV, pp. 147-203.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 2: 12-30.
2. Read Chapter 5 in the Study Guide.

THE PURSUIT OF UNITY

Philippians 2:12-30

THE GREAT HYMN has thundered to its close, and with v. 12 Paul abruptly comes back to Philippi. He leaves the future, with its vision of the Lord in cosmic triumph, and returns to the persistent problems of the present. There is still a little trouble in Philippi.

At once the apostle is all business. The lyric mood is over. Stern and affectionate by turn, he first lectures the Philippians like an Old Testament prophet, then chats with them like a friend.

Philippians 2: 12-13—Responsibility for Unity

Therefore . . . as you have always obeyed, so now . . . in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you.

With his first word Paul indicates that though the mood has changed, he is still writing about the same subject, unity in the church. The hymn is over, but the "therefore" in v. 12 resumes the appeal to the example of Christ's humility which is the key to unity.

The stress is on the element of obedience in that example. As Christ was obedient (v. 8), so now you must be obedient (v. 12), he says. Then, as Christ's obedience brought exaltation, you may expect that your obedience will bring salvation. This puts the responsibility squarely where it belongs, on them. Do not depend on me any longer, he is saying; depend on yourselves. "Work out your *own* salvation." (See Joseph B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 116.)

But what a shocking phrase to find in a letter from Paul! If there is anything the Christian can *not* do in Paul's gospel of grace, it is work out his own salvation. To the Galatians, to the Romans, to all his churches, he has written time and again to warn against the fatal illusion that salvation can be earned. "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? . . . Did you receive the Spirit by works?" (Gal. 3: 1-2.) How can he now calmly turn his back on everything for which he had fought so vigorously, and teach the Philippians work-righteousness?

Some Bible scholars suggest that the apostle must have caught his own mistake and hastily corrected it in the next verse. Having written "work out your own salvation," he stops, recovers himself, and quickly changes the subject of the verb. Not "you work," but "God works in you."

No, Paul means both. "You work" *and* "God works." The next chapter will make quite clear that Paul has lost none of his fire against the salvation-by-works heretics and that he has not abandoned free grace or salvation by faith. But neither has he abandoned an equally important doctrine, the doctrine of human responsibility. Paul does not try to resolve the paradox between man's free will and God's determining will. He teaches both, as if confident that parallel truths like parallel lines, though they may not be brought together on earth by finite minds, will nevertheless meet in the infinity of the life hereafter.

There is not as much of a paradox in these verses, however, as might be thought, if we read them in context. The subject is obedience and unity, not salvation. The "work" Paul is urging on the Philippians is simply the kind of obedience to God that comes from humility and leads to unity. In other words, obedience like Christ's. This was the whole point of the great hymn of Christ's example. And the "salvation" of which he speaks is not the goal of the work, not even its direct result—the direct result was death. Salvation is a reward, and in the case of man, as Paul makes very clear elsewhere, it is an unearned reward, a free gift (Eph. 2: 8-9).

The balance between "work out your own salvation" and "God is at work in you" has been put this way: "You work out what God works in." This puts the weight on the right side of the partnership, but the truth is deeper than that. Paul is not drawing up a legal contract, with footnotes spelling out just what part is God's work and what part is man's. His thought, rather, is of a spiritual union, a blending of wills. It is the other side of his favorite phrase, "in Christ." When we are "in Christ," then God is "in us." "For God is at work in you."

Surely, here is the place for a shout of joy. God is with us! Why does Paul speak instead so soberly of "fear and trembling"? The phrase conjures up memories of harsh Puritan preaching, of Jonathan Edwards and soul-shaking sermons like "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Actually it is only to the modern mind that the fear of God seems incompatible with joy; and Edwards' God is nearer to Paul's than the "sweet little old somebody up there" of today's pop theology. But in this case Paul is not speaking of God's anger. His reference is rather to God's cooperating presence. The fear of which the verse speaks, therefore, is not terror at God's anger, but that proper sense of awe which man must not lose as he stands before the presence of the Almighty.

There is a place in life for the right kind of fear. A man who goes into battle without proper fear will never make a good soldier. A man who comes

before God without the proper fear will never make a good Christian. Christians who presume on the promise of God's presence to claim a first-name, hand-holding, buddy-buddy relationship with Deity do not really know in whose presence they stand. This is the God who answers by fire (I Kings 18: 24); the thunder of whose power no man can understand (Job 26: 14). He knows the secrets of the heart (Ps. 44: 21) and all things are naked and open before him (Heb. 4: 13). There can be no easy familiarity in such a presence, but vigilance, rather, and awe and reverential fear. Sir Edmund Hillary, conqueror of Everest, says that every minute he is on a mountain he is afraid, but now that he has learned to live with fear, it no longer paralyzes. It only keeps him keen and alert. In this kind of fear there is no dismay, but a fierce joy and a strange attraction that draws the climber back again and again to the mountains. So it is with the fear of God. There is no terror in it for the Christian but confidence and joy and a strange attraction that draws him with reverence into the very presence of God.

Philippians 2: 14-18—The Marks of Responsibility

Do all things without grumbling . . . , that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God . . . in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that . . . I may be proud. . . . Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice. . . . Be glad and rejoice with me.

Paul continues his lecture on Christian unity by outlining four further marks of obedient, responsible Christians.

1. *They get along with their fellow Christians.* Do not grumble, or argue, or question one another's motives, says Paul. These were the signs of disunity that tore apart the Children of Israel in the wilderness and delayed for so many years their entrance into the Promised Land. Petty personal differences and rivalries can tear a church apart as fast as theological differences. In fact, the latter is often used only as an excuse for a division that was actually caused by the former.

2. *They are an example to non-Christians.* A Korean proverb runs, "It takes only one fish to muddy a whole stream." For one person's lapse, a whole congregation can be blamed; for one congregation's disunity the whole church can be discredited. So "be blameless," says Paul, and "shine like stars in a dark world" (Moffatt's translation). But what kind of shining example is a divided church? "A world lying broken and half-dead on one side of the road," said Dr. Walter Horton, "will not be helped much by a church lying broken and half-dead on the other side."

3. *They hold the faith.* The "word of life" of which Paul speaks, is the

gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. Christians are both to hold it fast and hold it out—the word Paul uses can mean either. There is unity in holding to the center, to Jesus Christ who is the Word of Life. But holding to the center will propel us to the ends of the earth, for unity is for mission and for giving the Word of Life to the whole world.

4. *They are expendable.* The paragraph closes as we might by now expect of Paul with a familiar combination: a note of personal affection, a realistic look at his own desperate position, and a burst of improbable joy.

The apostle has been asking a good deal of the Philippians, lecturing at them like a preacher. Now he speaks to them as an old friend. It may be a lot to ask, he is saying, but do it; do it for me. I may not be with you much longer, and I can die happy if only I know that you are faithful. Once again the old warrior looks death in the face and is unafraid. He uses a figure of speech unfamiliar to us, but readily understood in a city like Philippi with all its pagan altars. The picture is of a cup of wine poured out upon the offering at the altar as a libation at a pagan sacrifice. The Philippians' faithfulness is their offering. Paul's death is only the cup of wine that crowns the sacrifice, and he offers his own blood as that wine, not at all appalled at the prospect. For he is expendable; it is their faithfulness that counts.

This is the final mark of Christian responsibility: to be expendable. We are Christ's expendables, says Paul, so let us all rejoice!

Philippians 2: 19-30—Leadership for Unity

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him, who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare. They all look after their own interests. . . . But Timothy's worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me. . . . I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and . . . fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need. . . . He was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him. . . . So receive him in the Lord with all joy; and honor such men, for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete your service to me.

It has been suggested by some that Paul here comes to the main purpose of his letter. Disturbed by reports of disunity, he determines to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to mend the rifts in the Philippian church, and writes this letter to assure them of a proper reception. This does not quite ring true to the tone of the letter. Paul's confident hope that the Philippians themselves, by God's grace in them, will close ranks and "work out their own salvation" does not suggest that they are in urgent need of outside leadership.

Nevertheless, leadership is important and Paul does indicate that he expects much of Timothy and Epaphroditus. His descriptions of the two men are an illuminating lesson on what the greatest leader the Christian mission has ever had looked for in his fellow workers when he was picking leaders.

1. *Timothy, the missionary partner* (vs. 19-24). Timothy is Paul's closest and most trusted associate. He calls him a son. In a very helpful study of Philippians, *The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians*, Paul Rees catches the spirit of Paul's description of Timothy in a quick, alliterative outline: He is *sympathetic*, "genuinely anxious for your welfare." He is *selfless*, "I have no one like him. . . . They all look after their own interests." He is *seasoned*, "You know his worth . . . as a son with a father he has served with me." The word for "worth" is used of tested metal.

Ultimately all three of the above characteristics are only aspects of the one indispensable condition for Christian leadership. It has already been described by Paul at the beginning of this chapter (ch. 2: 3). Moffatt translates it, "never acting for private ends." Timothy is anxious only for others, the one kind of anxiety permitted in the Christian. He is the model of the Christian leader because he is concerned for others, not himself; his thought is only for the cause of Christ, not his own interests; and he works *with* his partner, not alone.

2. *Epaphroditus, the local leader* (vs. 25-30). We might say, in terms of today's missionary partnership, that Timothy was the missionary and Epaphroditus the national worker. Timothy came from outside, though he was part Greek; whereas Epaphroditus belonged to the church of Philippi. He was probably one of its pastors and had come bringing a gift from the congregation to help Paul in prison. Like Timothy he has the marks of Christian leadership: *sympathy*, "distressed because you heard that he was ill"; *selflessness*, "risking his life to complete *your* service"; and *seasoning*, "fellow worker and fellow soldier."

It is no discredit to his missionary colleague, Timothy, that Paul singles out Epaphroditus for special mention. "Honor such men," he says. Too often the heroism of the national worker is unhonored and unsung. Everyone knows of the missionary martyrs of the Boxer rebellion. One hundred eighty-eight men, women, and children were killed and "there is no record of a single attempt at recantation or wavering of purpose," says the historian, Professor Latourette. But more than 1,900 Chinese Protestant Christians were killed by the Boxers. Theirs is the greater honor. They could so easily have escaped. When Pastor Meng, the first Chinese ordained by the North China Mission of the American Board (Congregational), heard that the missionaries were in danger, instead of fleeing for his life, he went straight to the city to help them. He insisted on keeping the preaching chapel open even when the Boxers closed in, ordering his oldest son to escape so that someone would be left to carry on the work, but staying himself at the post

until he was tortured and killed. He belongs with Epaphroditus on Paul's honor roll. (Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, p. 517.)

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is unity so important in Christian mission? Is it any less important in the church at home?
2. What are the principal causes of disunity in the American church? What are some signs of its unity? Is there a proper place for denominationalism?
3. One commentator finds five marks of the Christian in Phil. 2: 12-16. Make your own list from these verses.
4. What special traits in Paul's character do his remarks about Timothy and Epaphroditus reveal?
5. Where else do we find reference to Christians as lights in the world? What is the source of this light?
6. Verse 28 contains another of Paul's answers to anxiety. What is it?
7. What kind of obedience is Paul asking for in v. 12?

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. a. Look up Timothy's background: I Cor. 4: 14-17; Acts 16: 1-5; ch. 19: 22.
b. What do the following references tell us about Timothy? II Tim. 1: 5; I Tim. 5: 23; I Cor. 16: 10; I Tim. 4: 12; II Tim. 2: 22; ch. 1: 8; ch. 3: 10; I Tim. 1: 2; II Tim. 1: 2; Rom. 16: 21.
2. Make a study of other Biblical passages pointing to obedience as a necessary response to God's free gift of grace. Begin with Gen. 12: 1-4; Jer. 7: 23; I Sam. 15: 22-23; Acts 5: 29; Heb. 5: 9; Rom. 6: 16-18; and Heb. 11: 8.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 3: 1-21.
2. Read Chapter 6 in the Study Guide.
3. Read The Letter of Paul to the Galatians.

THREE THREATS TO UNITY

Philippians 3:1-21

THE THIRD CHAPTER of Philippians begins as though Paul is ready to sign and seal the letter and send it off with Epaphroditus. He cannot end, however, without a final summons to joy. "Finally," he writes, "rejoice in the Lord." It is not anxiety about his troubles but joy in Christ that has been the theme of the whole letter, so he mentions it now again at the end.

Then, suddenly and so abruptly that some scholars have questioned whether the next paragraphs belong in the original letter at all, Paul breaks out into a blazing attack on enemies that he fears could split and divide his beloved Philippians. The enemies are his old adversaries, the Judaizers, but before he has finished with them he has warned the church about two other dangers that could destroy its unity in Christ. The chapter divides itself into three warnings: (1) against legalism (vs. 1-11); (2) against perfectionism (vs. 12-16); and (3) against libertinism (vs. 17-21).

Any one of the three can destroy Christian unity, so this group of warnings is no real interruption of the train of thought in the letter. It is rather a continuation of Paul's plea for unity through humility. Each warning is a condemnation of some form of that self-righteous pride which is the very opposite of humility. Legalism is pride in keeping the law. Perfectionism is pride in oneself. Libertinism is pride in breaking the law.

There is, therefore, no sufficient reason to doubt that this section is an integral part of Paul's letter to Philippi. It reveals more of his personal life and inner spirit than any other single part of his writings. As for the abrupt transition, his style is always swift and mercurial. It would take only a chance word dropped about the Judaizers, or the passing thought of the defenselessness of the little church in Philippi, now that he can no longer protect it in person, to start his quick mind off in a new direction. At any rate, whatever the reason, he cannot bring himself to say farewell without these three final admonitions.

Philippians 3: 1-11—Self-righteous Legalists

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. . . . Look out for the dogs, . . . for the evil-workers . . . who mutilate the flesh. . . .

We are the true circumcision, who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh. Though . . . if any . . . man thinks he has reason for confidence . . . , I have more: circumcised . . . , a Hebrew born of Hebrews; . . . a Pharisee, . . . a persecutor of the church, . . . under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. . . . I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God . . . ; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, . . . that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Just before the beginning of his mission to Europe and his first visit to Philippi some thirteen years earlier, Paul had fought and won one of the most decisive battles in church history. His defense of Christian liberty at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts, ch. 15) was a turning point in the whole course of Christian thought. His opponents were the Judaizers. It was only natural that among the early Christians many were unable to see how radically the coming of Christ had changed the entire pattern of man's relationship to God. Jewish themselves, and reared in Judaism, the foundation of their thinking was still the Mosaic law. It was inconceivable to them that one could become a Christian save on this foundation. The issue was simple. Must a man become a Jew before he can become a Christian? Yes, said the Judaizers, he must first submit to the Jewish initiatory rite of circumcision. No, said Paul. There is only one foundation, Jesus Christ, and any man is free to come to him directly, not through Moses. He appealed to the apostles in Jerusalem. And there, in a decision that changed the tide of history, the council stood solidly with Paul for liberty.

To have that victory questioned now at Philippi makes Paul's anger rise, and his language thickens. Bluntly, almost brutally, he slashes out at those who would divide the church and take it captive again into the bondage of the law. "Dogs," and flesh mutilators, he calls them, and zeroes in on their central error. The first and fatal mistake of legalists is a smothering concern for the nonessential. In the case of the Judaizers it took the form of obsessive concern with Jewish rites and race and legal righteousness. These, therefore, are what Paul attacks. What the Judaizers falsely insist are the essentials of the faith, he exposes as only the externals. What counts is Christ, he says.

1. *Rites* (vs. 2-3). Circumcision is nothing, he argues; Christ is everything. His appeal is from ritual circumcision to true circumcision. He echoes a truth that not even his Judaizing opponents can deny, for it comes from the Old Testament, namely, that genuine circumcision is more than a cutting of the flesh; it is a "circumcision of the heart" (Deut. 10: 16). The gospel does not begin with the body and its mutilation; it is of the spirit. We worship God in spirit, says Paul, and glory not in ceremonies but in Christ.

2. *Race* (vs. 4-7). Jewishness is nothing, Paul continues; Christ is everything. The narrow concern of the Judaizers for rites and ceremonies was only a symptom of a more serious ill. Its deeper and fiercely dangerous root was racial pride. Paul's attack on this evil is devastating, for he strikes at it from within. An outsider's criticism they could dismiss as jealousy. But all that was so precious to them in their Jewishness, Paul already had and more. He ticks off his claims to pure membership like a Klansman adding up his 100-percent Americanism, then icily brushes it aside as dirt with the contempt it deserves.

His appeal is from racial Jewishness to true Jewishness, and from racial Israel to the true Israel. Perhaps the suggestion came from Luke, his traveling companion in Philippi, whose Gospel, as Ernest J. Tinley's *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible: Luke* points out, takes as its central theme the assertion that the "true Israel" is Christ. The man "in Christ" is more truly Jewish, therefore, than mere circumcision can ever make him. What makes a man a true Israelite? A primitive surgical rite? Proud and proper birth? Fanatic, narrow zeal? Pharisaic rectitude? I had all that and found it empty form, says Paul. The truth, the essence, the "incomparable worth" is Jesus Christ.

3. *Legal righteousness* (vs. 8-11). Human righteousness is nothing, Paul says; Christ is everything. His appeal is from the righteousness that comes from keeping the law, to true righteousness that comes through faith in Christ. It has been said that these verses contain the clearest statement of the doctrine of justification by faith in Scripture. It was Rom. 1: 17 that caught at Luther's heart and sparked the mighty Reformation, but the same truth is even more simply and clearly brought into focus here. In fact, Phil. 4: 9 is a one-sentence summary of the whole letter to the Romans.

The contrast is between work-righteousness and faith-righteousness. Luther, as a monk, knew only the former. "You must earn your salvation," his friends told him, repeating the error of the Judaizers. So the young professor would go home at night from his lectures and beat himself in his room until the blood ran. Then, fearing that mortification of the flesh might not be enough for salvation, he threw himself into works of mercy and went about doing good. A plague came to the town. Monks, students, and faculty scattered to safety and begged him to fly with them. Luther refused. "My place is with the sick and dying," he said. "I am afraid of death, but there are things worse than death." He was thinking of hell. Surely, he thought to himself, if I die doing good works and caring for the sick, even the All-Terrible God will grant me the sweet mercy of forgiveness. But he did not die, and not even in good works did he find a sense of forgiveness. He still suffered the torments of the damned.

Then, one day in May, he began to prepare some lectures on Paul's letters. "He who through faith is righteous shall live," he read in Romans, and all at once and so strongly that he believed it was the direct work of the Holy

Spirit, he saw that the righteousness which means forgiveness—the righteousness for which he had worked so painfully—was not his to be worked out at all. It comes not by works but by faith. It is the free gift of God's love. Man is not saved by doing good but by simple trust in Christ, like the thief on the cross. Goodness is the result of salvation, but never the cause of it.

Paul closes his blistering attack on the legalists' counterfeit Christianity with a short and moving summary of what it really means to be a Christian. It means not to count on our own goodness but to accept by faith Christ and his true righteousness. And it means to receive more than his righteousness; it means also to receive his power and to share his sufferings. What an unusual combination! Power and suffering. Yet this is what it will mean to be a Christian. Do not expect the power without a share of the suffering. But also, do not be anxious about the suffering, for there will be the power to bear it. And the end is not death but joy, the joy of the resurrection.

Philippians 3: 12-16—Self-satisfied Saints

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. . . . One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to that which lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded.

Paul's condemnation of the legalistic self-righteousness of the Judaizers is withering and complete, but honesty compels him to add a sharp reminder to Christians. Self-righteousness is not limited to Pharisees. There is Christian self-righteousness as well, even among the "saints." It rests on the false assumption that since by faith Christ's righteousness is ours, nothing further can be required of us. "In him" we are already perfect and sinless.

Such a passive, self-satisfied forgery of the Christian faith is given short shrift by the apostle. He attacks it from within, as he did against the legalists, but much more gently and indirectly. He uses the simple device of describing his own Christian experience, and the comparison with smug Christian perfectionists becomes embarrassingly clear. Not even Paul the apostle dares to claim he has reached perfection.

Paul's strenuous, never satisfied, restless, reaching faith is as different from the backward-looking self-righteousness of pseudoperfectionism as a race is from a testimony meeting. The real saint, as Paul describes him, is more like an athlete than an angel. He has a race to be run and a future to be won. The past is gone, and is better forgotten than continually dredged up for past experience of grace with which to bolster Christian pride. The perfection of which Paul speaks never lies in the past. It is never quite achieved; it always lies ahead. The word means full maturity. The prize toward which he presses

is that complete Christianity that is always just beyond the grasp until Christ, who has already made us his own (v. 12), calls us up at last to be with him (v. 14).

Philippians 3: 17-21—Self-serving Sinners

Join in imitating me, . . . for many . . . live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him . . . to subject all things to himself.

If there is anything worse than a self-righteous Jew or a self-righteous Christian, it is a self-righteous sinner. There are more such than might be imagined—inverted Pharisees whose delight in damning the pietists for pride in being good pushes them into the opposite trap, pride in being bad. "Glorying in shame," Paul calls it (v. 19), and it is the worst kind of self-righteousness. The Pharisee praying, "God, I thank thee, that I am not . . . as this publican" (Luke 18: 11, KJV), is the classic example of self-righteousness. But how much worse, someone has suggested, is a publican praying, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as this Pharisee."

Self-righteous legalism is a hardening of the Christian arteries, a rigidity that destroys freedom, and it is wrong. But just as wrong is the kind of perpetual Christian adolescence that mistakes its first taste of liberty for the abolition of law, and defines freedom as permission to sin. It is not the legalist's *righteousness* that is wrong; it is his *self-righteousness*. Jesus himself warned the disciples, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5: 20).

So Paul reminds self-indulgent Christians, "whose god is their belly," who have turned the liberty of the gospel into license, that though there is no salvation in the law, there is still law in the gospel. "We are a colony of heaven," he says (in Moffatt's splendid translation of Phil. 3: 20), and does more than contrast thereby the earth-mindedness of the libertine with the higher ideals of the Christian. To Philippi, a colony of Rome with all its pride in Roman law, the phrase would come as a reminder that heaven has its disciplines as well as its privileges. Romans were free by law; yet Romans were under law. So Christians are free by grace, but under discipline. If, in a secular state, liberty has its responsibilities, how much more in "a colony of heaven."

Note the contrasts by which Paul sets off Christians (vs. 20-21) from willful sinners (vs. 18-19). *Their* God is their belly; *ours* is a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their minds are in the dirt; ours are in heaven. Their glory is shame; ours is the glory of Christ's resurrection power. Their end is destruction; we look with hope to the end of time, for Christ shall come again.

It is on this note that the chapter ends. Paul has turned from warnings to promise, as if he fears that his stern injunctions against so many kinds of error might leave his friends confused and anxious. But there is no reason for the Christian to be anxious about sin. He has a Savior. There is no reason for him to be anxious about *anything*. His Savior is "master of everything that is" (v. 21, Phillips).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. List the reasons why Paul could be rightfully proud of his Jewish heritage. What were the dangers involved in it?
2. In the church today rites and ceremonies can be both a help and a hindrance to our understanding of Christian truth. Explain.
3. What is Christian maturity as Paul teaches it here? How does it differ from perfectionism?
4. When Christians reject legalism, what kind of Christian disciplines remain? What is "the law still in the gospel"? See how many of the Ten Commandments you can find repeated in the New Testament.
5. What is the distinction between Christian liberty and license? What does Paul mean by those whose "God is their belly" (KJV)?
6. What does Paul mean by "knowing Christ"? How does he amplify this in terms of profit and loss?
7. What does v. 17 tell us about Paul as a teacher? Why does he remind his Philippian friends that "our commonwealth is in heaven"? (v. 20).
8. What do we mean by Christian liberty today?
9. What does Paul mean by "glorying in shame"? Give evidences of this today.

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. Two years ago the Bible study was on Galatians. Review your study of legalism as presented in that letter. How does it compare with Phil. 3: 1-11?
2. Make a study of "righteousness" as taught in the Bible. What is the righteousness we are to seek? (See, for example, Rom. 10: 1-4; Luke 18: 9-14; Isa. 45: 24; Phil. 3: 6-8; Matt. 5: 6; Eph. 4: 22-24; Gal. 2: 20-21; ch. 3: 21; Rom. 3: 20-24; ch. 9:30-32; Titus 3: 5; Gal. 3: 6; I Cor. 1: 30; Rom. 4: 13. Using a concordance, continue your study.)

ASSIGNMENT

1. Study Phil. 4: 1-23.
2. Read Chapter 7 in the Study Guide.

FINAL APPEALS

Philippians 4:1-23

ONCE AGAIN PAUL is ready to finish the letter, and once again so many things crowd into his mind that the farewell stretches on and on as if he cannot bring himself to say good-by to ones so dear to him. Love crowds in between every word of the first verse of this last chapter.

But Christian love is not blind, as Paul proves when he proceeds at once to rebuke his beloved Philippians for a break in their unity. Like the love of God, who loved us "while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5: 8), Paul's love for his friends in Philippi is not lessened by his awareness of their faults. Out of such understanding love pours his final appeals for unity and joy in Christ.

Philippians 4: 1-3—Women, unite!

Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm . . . in the Lord. . . . I entreat Euodia and . . . Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you . . . , true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest . . . , whose names are in the book of life.

One of the minor fascinations of this passage is the mystery of the names. For sixteen hundred years people have been speculating about the identity of Euodia and Syntyche and the "true yokefellow" and Clement. Who were they? One delightfully dubious old tradition has it that Syntyche was not a woman but a man, and who else but the Philippian jailer! The same source identifies Euodia as his wife, which reduces the whole problem in Philippi to the level of a domestic spat. More romantically, some have guessed that the "true yokefellow" is Paul's wife and none other than Lydia, his first convert in Europe.

But happy fantasy aside, it is now well accepted that Euodia and Syntyche were two leading women in the Philippian church, perhaps deaconesses. Paul's tribute to them—they "labored side by side with me in the gospel"—is a mark of the significant standing of women in the early church and particularly at Philippi. Women in Macedonia seemed to enjoy a higher social

position than in almost any other part of the ancient world. Macedonian cities were erecting public monuments in honor of prominent women at a time when Greece as a whole was shockingly notorious for its degradation of the role of women in society. The best wife, a Greek historian had said, is the one who is least heard of. But in Macedonia, building on the more favorable attitude to women there, the Christian church took some of its earliest steps toward what has been called its noblest social triumph, the elevation of the status of women. (Joseph B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 55 f.; see also S. Angus, *The Environment of Early Christianity*, pp. 44 ff.)

Nowhere else in the whole record of Paul's missionary journeys do women occupy so remarkable a place in the life of the church as at Philippi. Three women were among its founders, Lydia, Euodia, and Syntyche. The name of a fourth, Stratonike, the wife of Apollophanes, is found in a very early but apocryphal document, the *Acts of Paul*. They were the vanguard in a long line of pioneer women who worked "side by side" with the apostles and prophets in the propagation of the gospel.

There is Phoebe, for example, a deaconess "who ministers to" the church at Cenchræa (Rom. 16: 1); and Prisca, a missionary (a woman apostle!) leader of a small church in Rome (vs. 3-5). There is Priscilla, who converted and instructed Apollos, one of the best-educated and socially prominent leaders in the earliest church. (Chrysostom deduces this from the fact that she is named before her husband in the record, Acts 18: 24-26.) One whole book of the New Testament, The Second Letter of John, is addressed to a woman. By the second century Christian literature is full of references to women teachers and missionaries, like the famous "apostle" Thecla at Iconium, and during the great persecutions the roll of the saints and martyrs was filled with more than a proportionate share of women's names. Among the better classes, women of wealth and social position clearly outnumbered the men in the church.

There seem to have been two orders in the early church for women: deaconesses and "widows." The deaconesses had almost a ministerial function, serving where men could not properly minister in that age, such as in the baptism, instruction, and supervision of the women of the church. The "widows" on the other hand, were essentially Christian social workers, as in I Tim. 5: 10. One very early document, the *Apostolic Church Order*, directs that every church should maintain three widows, of whom two should be devoted to prayer while the other is to be a sick nurse. (See C. Biggs, *The Origins of Christianity*, pp. 268 f.)

It is a melancholy fact that the two women leaders at Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche, would probably be unknown to us except for their quarrel. What a contrast between the first mention of women in that church (Acts, ch. 16), and this second mention here. It was women at prayer who gave the Philippian church its foundation; it is women quarreling who now threaten

to shatter that foundation and destroy its unity. The more important women become in the life of the church, the more important become the purity and unity of their lives together in Christ. But it is reassuring to note that there was still no open break, no schism, and Paul is confident that with the help of their fellow Christians, including the "true yokefellow" (who was, perhaps, the husband of one of the two), the breach will be healed and harmony restored. So again he says, "Rejoice!"

Philippians 4: 4-9—Worry About Nothing; Rejoice in Everything

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer . . . with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and . . . minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, . . . honorable, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . gracious, if there is any excellence, . . . anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have . . . heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul has three important things to say in this passage about the deep roots and wide reaches of the joy that drives out fear and calms anxiety.

1. It is, first of all, *a joy that begins in Christ* (vs. 4-5). Note how easily and naturally Paul works into his plea for harmony and joy a reminder that it takes more than a turning to each other to restore Christian unity in God's people. Three times he repeats the seminal phrase, "in the Lord": "Stand firm in the Lord" (v. 1); "Agree in the Lord" (v. 2); and now again, "Rejoice in the Lord" (v. 4). He is a good teacher. Repetition enforces the lesson he has already taught in ch. 2 that the power for Christian joy and unity comes not from man but from Christ, for being "in Christ." So sure is Paul of this power that he can dismiss the shadow of the quarrel from his mind, depending on Euodia and Syntyche to demonstrate openly what they already have in Christ, namely, the gentle and forgiving spirit that Paul calls "forbearance" (v. 5).

In that confidence the apostle turns again to the joy that never fails him, joy in the Lord, and adds the happy shout of the early Christians, which was their watchword and signal, the last word on the lips of the martyrs as they faced, with a joy their persecutors could never understand, the beasts and the fire and the sword. "The Lord is at hand." "Maranatha." He is with us now; and he will come again. So what is there to fear? Rejoice!

2. It is *a joy without anxiety that grows by prayer* (vs. 6-7). There is indeed absolutely nothing for the Christian to be anxious about, says Paul. In his book *The Adequate Man: Paul in Philippians*, Paul Rees quotes a physician's analysis of the "worries" he was called upon to treat as patients. "Forty per-

position than in almost any other part of the ancient world. Macedonian cities were erecting public monuments in honor of prominent women at a time when Greece as a whole was shockingly notorious for its degradation of the role of women in society. The best wife, a Greek historian had said, is the one who is least heard of. But in Macedonia, building on the more favorable attitude to women there, the Christian church took some of its earliest steps toward what has been called its noblest social triumph, the elevation of the status of women. (Joseph B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 55 f.; see also S. Angus, *The Environment of Early Christianity*, pp. 44 ff.)

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law and religion; (4) purity, the supreme virtue in personal morality; (5) loveliness, and all that is best in art (though the word refers more to personal charm than abstract beauty); and (6) graciousness, or praiseworthiness, which is the mark of a good reputation, the highest honor society can bestow.

Paul sums up the whole list of virtues in two words, "excellence" and "praise," and thereby baptizes with his blessing all that is good and praiseworthy in this world wherever it may be found. The Christian's mind need run in no restricted ruts. It has its disciplines, and it is to be kept "in Christ," but it is free to rove the whole world to seek beauty, truth, and goodness.

"Believe; don't think," says the frightened Christian, but it is not the Bible speaking. "Believe, *and* think," says Paul. "Think on these things," as I do. "And the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4: 10-20—A Word of Thanks and a Lesson in Contentment

I rejoice in the Lord . . . that now . . . you have revived your concern for me. . . . Not that I complain . . . ; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. . . . I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. . . . When I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you. . . . Not that I seek the gift; but . . . the fruit which increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more . . . from . . . the gifts you sent. . . . And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever. . . . Amen.

This is Paul's thank-you note for the gifts from his converts in Philippi. What a masterpiece of letter writing! Who but Paul could thank a donor for his gift so graciously, all the time telling him he really didn't need it. No one but Paul could do it, perhaps because no one but Paul saw so clearly as he the glorious paradox of the Christian life. It is a life on two levels. Paul was in prison, but at the same time he was in Christ. The Philippians were to be good citizens of Philippi (ch. 1: 27, where the word "worthy" refers to citizenship), but they were also citizens of heaven (ch. 3: 20). This may be a paradox, but it is not a contradiction. The final secret of contentment, Paul tells his anxious age, is to learn to live on two levels, not in tension, but in peace.

The paradox of the two levels, as well as the resolution of the paradox in Christ, is pointed up in the sharp contrast between a verse at the beginning of the letter and another here near the end. "Paul . . . [a] slave of Jesus Christ." That is how the letter begins. But it closes with that slave asserting, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (v. 13). Only a slave, but he

has unlimited power. The New Testament way to power and joy and contentment and peace is to become the servant, the slave, the captive of the Servant Lord.

“Make me a captive, Lord, And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword, And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life’s alarms When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms, And strong shall be my hand.

“My heart is weak and poor Until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure—It varies with the wind.
It cannot freely move Till Thou hast wrought its chain;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love, And deathless it shall reign.”

On one level of life Paul was a prisoner in Rome and a servant of Christ and of all Christ’s people. On this level he needed help and needed it desperately. When the Philippians responded in love to his need, his gratitude was as genuine as their love. That level, the level of need, is as real and inescapable as hunger and thirst and sickness and death.

But there is another level, the level of needs supplied (v. 19), of anxieties quieted (vs. 6-7), of utter contentment (v. 11), and of power overflowing (v. 13). At this level Paul had no need of human gifts, and no more wants. He had learned to be content.

This part of the letter, as J. H. Michael, quoting Carlyle, points out, is inseparably associated with Oliver Cromwell. As the Great Protector began to weaken of the sickness that was to cause his death, he called for a Bible and asked that Phil. 4: 11-13 be read to him. He listened, and said: “‘This Scripture did once save my life; when my eldest son died; which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did.’ And then repeating the words of the text himself, and reading the tenth and eleventh verses, of Paul’s contentment and submission to the will of God in all conditions—said he: ‘It’s true, Paul, *you* have learned this and attained to this measure of grace: but what shall *I* do? Ah poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out! I find it so!’ But reading on to the thirteenth verse, where Paul saith, ‘I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,’—then faith began to work, and his heart to find support and comfort, and he said thus to himself, ‘He that was Paul’s Christ is my Christ too!’ And so drew waters out of the well of Salvation.”

Paul’s Christ *is* our Christ, and by him, says Paul, “God will supply your every need.” The key word is *supply*. Scientists tell us the real problem is not resources but supply. There is enough food in the world for all if man could only distribute it. There is enough power in the sunlight falling on the Arizona desert to keep everybody in the world warm and to turn all the dynamos on earth, if we could only harness and distribute it. All the anxieties

of the world center in the unbridged gap between these two levels of life—between need and abundance, weakness and power, want and contentment. The lesson of Philippians is that the gap has been bridged by Jesus Christ. He crossed the gulf. God became Man, becoming poor that we might be rich. In him, says Paul, all God's "riches in glory" are ours.

But there is one other key word, *needs*. It does not read, *wants*. To learn the difference is to know another of the secrets of the Christian answer to anxiety.

Philippians 4: 21-23—A Personal Farewell

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. . . . All the saints greet you. . . .
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Even after he has said "Amen," Paul cannot quite bring himself to end the letter to his friends whom he may never see again. He greets them once more, every one; repeating as he does so the vital phrase "in Christ Jesus," which has breathed life and power into every part of the letter. Then, as he ends, his last words pick up the theme with which he started, unity. In the old King James Version the benediction reads, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," but the better manuscripts have Paul's final emphasis in his last words to the Philippians falling on unity. Not "you all" and the diversity of the plural, but "your spirit" and the unity of the singular. "Be with your spirit," his benediction ends, for "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" has indeed made them one.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What bearing has ch. 4: 1-7 on the situation at Philippi?
2. In the first three verses what are the three things Paul gives the Philippians to do "in the Lord"?
3. Is the role of men and women in the church today different from that in Paul's day? How?
4. What are two great qualities of the Christian life as set forth by Paul in vs. 4 and 5?
5. How is the essential character of the letter reflected in ch. 4: 4-7?
6. What was Paul's secret of contentment?
7. What makes Paul most happy about the gift from the church in Philippi?

FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE MORE INTENSIVE STUDY

1. What are the most striking characteristics of Paul's letter to the Philippians?
2. Review all the different answers to anxiety that Paul suggests in this letter.
3. Try writing a one-page summary of Philippians in letter style.

JOY FOR THE ANXIOUS AGE

A Study Guide on Philippians

by Samuel Hugh Moffett
and
Eileen Flower Moffett

(Page 3)

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	5
Chapter 1 Troubled Times (An Introduction)	7
2 Thank God for Partners	14
3 The Joys of Adversity	20
4 A Mind for Joy	26
5 The Pursuit of Unity	34
6 Three Threats to Unity	40
7 Final Appeals	47

PREFACE

The Letter to the Philippians is a Christian answer to anxiety. It is God's message through Paul to the church in an anxious age. Its theme is joy.

The question is, how could such great joy spring from such troubled times? The apostle was in prison. The world was going to ruin all about him. His favorite church, the congregation in Philippi, was in danger of division. Yet with the serenest confidence he wrote, "I am glad and rejoice. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me." (Phil. 2: 18.) Why? What was there for him to be joyful about?

It should be worth a little time for us in our own age of anxiety to search this beautiful little letter for the answer. We may then be rewarded with the discovery of two of the rarest secrets of the Christian life: How to be happy in an unhappy world, and how to find unity in the midst of division.

The search should also give us an unparalleled picture of the inner, private life and thought of the greatest Christian who ever lived, for this is the most personal and most affectionate of all Paul's letters.

This study guide is divided into seven chapters. The first is introductory, outlining the background of the epistle. The other six deal in succession with the major divisions of the letter. Each chapter contains study helps and an additional appendix for those with the will and the time for deeper, harder Bible study.

S.H.M. and E.F.M.

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This Protestant seminary is now the largest one in all Asia. The present enrollment is over 250, and more than one thousand of its graduates are serving the church in Korea.

Chapter 1

TROUBLED TIMES (An Introduction)

The Letter to the Philippians was written from Rome probably about 62 A.D., only thirty years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and halfway through the reign of the Emperor Nero.

The nineteen hundred years that have^{passed} since then have changed the world in almost everything but its anxieties. Today's man may conquer space, but he still wrestles as unsuccessfully as the Romans and the Philippians with the harder problems of war and poverty and unhappiness and the ultimate meaning of life.

The Anxious World of the First Century. Like ours, the age of the apostle was an age of war. Rome was the strongest power on earth, but it was discovering to its surprise that it takes more than an army to keep the world at peace. At the edges of its strength, on the far borders, there was always war. What Viet Nam is to the world today, the British Isles and Armenia were to Rome while Paul was writing to Philippi. He was writing to a city that knew war at first hand, a city of soldiers and their families. Philippi had been chosen by the Emperor as a home for veterans of Rome's wars. There were men still living there who had fought against Antony and Cleopatra. It is not surprising therefore to note how often he uses martial language in the letter.

Like ours also that age was an age of uneasy extremes of wealth and poverty. The Emperor Nero could spend the equivalent of \$175,000 on Egyptian roses for just one banquet, yet one out of every three or four persons in Rome was a slave. As Rome's wealth increased, its virtue seemed to disappear. The cities decayed. Women were warned to stay off the streets of Rome at night. Every pleasure and every vice was available. Philippi, as a Roman colony, had privileged status and had become a little Rome with all the trappings and temptations of Roman baths and theaters and Dionysian revels.¹ Note how Paul warns the church there against the enticements of luxury, the "god of the belly" (Phil. 3:19), and encourages the Philippians in the right use of money (ch. 4:14-18).

Like ours it was an age of rapid social change. Philippi saw the fading of "the glory that was Greece." It had been founded in northern Greece (Macedonia) by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Now it had passed

¹ S. Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, p. 32; D. A. Hays, Paul and His Epistles, p. 410.

into the hands of Rome, but though the language of the city was Latin the country people still spoke Greek. The West of that day was being Romanized, as the world of today is being Westernized. There were many who bemoaned the changing of the times, but not Paul. At Philippi he wasted no time lamenting the passing of the old, but used the new Roman ways to the advantage of the gospel. (Acts, Ch. 16.)

Rome itself was changing from Republic to Empire, and the city of Philippi had figured prominently in the change, for it was on the plains about the city that one of the decisive battles of history took place. There, about one hundred years before the coming of Paul, Augustus, the first Emperor and the nephew of Julius Caesar, defeated the last Republican, Brutus, and Rome moved from democracy to dictatorship. Its age of rugged individualism came to an end. Emperors shook off the authority of the Senate and ruled like Oriental despots. By the time Paul wrote this letter they were even beginning to be worshiped like Oriental gods.² When Paul reminded the Philippians that there is a "name above every name," and that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:9-11), he was calling them to a confession that would clash head-on with Emperor worship and in a year or two would provoke the first of the great Roman persecutions.

But above all, like ours, that age was an age when life too easily lost its meaning and man too easily gave up hope. The frantic vices of the Empire were but a vain search for happiness when real hope of happiness had died, a kind of Roman existentialism.

The best philosopher of the age was Seneca. He was a Roman millionaire who could lie on a purple couch under golden ceilings and murmur in strange despair that life is living death, "a fatal gift of which the best that can be said is that the torture is short."³

In the same city, Rome, was a Jewish prisoner in chains. The sad and suave philosopher and the fiery little Jew probably never met. The social contacts of a prisoner in Rome were limited. But when Paul wrote to Philippi, out of that prison cell came a trumpet call of Christian joy that is the best answer ever written to Seneca's unhappy gospel of universal pessimism.

The Happy Prisoner. No one seriously doubts that Paul was the author of this letter. About a hundred years ago it was fashionable for a time, particularly in Germany, to attack the genuineness of the letter on the ground that it is too gentle and kind to be a letter of the thundering Paul. Modern scholarship, however, has discredited this line of criticism. As one recent commentator puts it, "This is a bit like saying that the Churchill who de-

² S. Dill, op. cit., p. 617.

³ Ibid., p. 14.

livered warlike speeches about Hitler could not have written friendly letters to Roosevelt....If this letter was not written by Paul, nothing was."⁴

There is not quite the same degree of certainty about where Paul was when he wrote the letter. It was either Rome or Ephesus, probably Rome. The general situation described could fit either city. Even the reference to the "praetorian guard" (ch. 1:13) does not rule out the possibility of Ephesus. But the weight of tradition, and the tone of Paul's references to his imprisonment and to the church in the city where he is imprisoned, make Rome the much more probable choice. The date, therefore, is about 62 A.D., ten years later than if it were written from Ephesus.⁵

What the letter says is much more important than where and when it was written. It tells how a Christian, even in jail, can be happier than the wisest and richest philosopher in the greatest city on earth. Compare Seneca's "Life is a fatal gift," with Paul's "I have learned in whatever state I am, ~~therewith~~ to be content" (ch. 4:11). KJW Moreover, there was something deeper than contentment to Paul's happiness. He was a man who knew the exquisite joy of vision--a vision that once had called him "over into Macedonia" to Philippi, and a vision that now even through prison bars showed him the whole world as Christ's. (Ch. 2:10-11.)

Philippi and the Christian Mission. It may have been the Philippian church's strategic position in Paul's world vision of Christian mission that gave it a special place in his heart and made this letter the warmest and most affectionate of all his epistles to the churches. (Ch. 1:7-9.) Paul loved Philippi as his first church in Europe. But more than that--for the geographical distinction did not mean as much then as it does now--Philippi marked an important step forward in the Christian march on Rome. Paul had already preached to Jews and Greeks. At Philippi, which had special Roman status as a colony of Roman citizens, he was reaching the edge of Rome itself, and Rome was the gateway to the whole world. It is in this global sense that Paul can describe the church in Philippi as "the beginning of the gospel" (ch. 4:15).

Philippi was indeed strategically located for mission in the world of that day. The main arterial highway, the Egnatian Way, between Asia and Rome was guarded at the edge of Europe by the forts of Philippi. So when Christianity entered Western history from Asia, it came with Paul through Philippi.

One of the most overworked myths of our time is that Western imperialism invaded the Orient through the Christian missionary movement. Philippians

⁴ C. E. Simcox, They Met at Philippi, Oxford, 1958, p. 21. For a discussion of the rise and fall of the critics' attack, see M. R. Vincent, Philippians (The International Critical Commentary), pp. xxv. ff.

⁵ See E. F. Scott, Philippians, in The Interpreters Bible, vol. 11, pp. 5-7.

reminds us that this is all wrong. The first missionary went the other way. The gospel did not "invade" Asia; it came from Asia, and its first beach-head in the European West, so far as we have any record, was a Philippi. Furthermore, in the communist myth, the missionary is the aggressor. In Philippi he is in prison; and he is in prison again when he writes to the Philippians. In the communist myth the missionary buys his converts with capitalist gold. In Philippi, again, it is just the other way around. It is the converts who are paying the missionary. The whole letter to Philippians is really just a thank-you note for their gifts. In the communist myth, the missionary is an imperialist, in Philippi, the missionary is of a conquered race, and it is his converts who are the imperialists. Curiously enough, even the little church there is born with an imperialist tinge in the house of Lydia, a seller of the imperial purple. As for the missionary, he was just a laborer, a maker of tents.

Look back then and imagine the apostle, the pioneer to Europe, as he steps ashore at the port of Neapolis. The account is in Acts 16, where the narrative suddenly switches to the first person, indicating that Luke had joined the party there. He was eager, perhaps, to show Paul his home town, for some think that Luke was born in Philippi. So the little missionary party hurries over the coastal ridge to the city nine miles away, with its Greek town stretching along the hills and the Roman colony spreading across the plain. Perhaps they passed a grove of trees where the river ran outside the city and where a small group of Jews met on the Sabbath for prayer. There a few days later Lydia "opened her heart" to the Lord. "It was in green pastures and beside still waters that St. Paul won his first European convert," observes Hastings. And she was a woman. The "man from Macedonia" turned out to be a woman!

The Women in Philippi. The church in Philippi is unique in the New Testament for the place occupied there by women. It is clear witness to the fact that from the beginning the Christian faith moved toward the emancipation of women. The first believer in Philippi was a businesswoman. (Acts 16:14.) The first open demonstration of Christian power there was the deliverance of a slave girl. (Acts 16:16-18.) Ten years later, when Paul writes to the church, two of the only three leaders in the church mentioned by name are women (Phil. 4:2), and he specifically notes the help that women had been to him in this the beginning of the Christian mission to the West. (Ch. 4:3.)

The Letter. For anyone who likes neat outlines constructed around a central, unifying theme, Philippians is going to be a disappointment. It is not an essay, like Romans, or Hebrews. It is pure letter, warm, personal, repetitious, and, like some sermons, twice as long as it starts out to be. Paul finishes his letter in chapter two (as we divide it), says "Finally," and then goes on for two more chapters. He writes seven verses in chapter 4, says "Finally" again, and goes on for twice as many more verses. Even after he has said "Amen" (ch. 4:20) he cannot stop but adds a three-verse postscript.

Analytically, the letter divides into six main sections:

1. Greetings and prayer for the Philippians (ch. 1:1-11).
2. Then the subject shifts to Paul's situation in Rome (ch. 1:12-26).
3. His thought turns back to Philippi with an appeal for unity (ch. 1:27 to 2:18).
4. Again in Rome, he tells of his future plans (ch. 2:19-30).
5. To Philippi once more, warnings and appeals (ch. 3:1 to 4:8).
6. Thanks for the gift from Philippi (ch. 4:9-23).

But we will divide the letter a little differently and outline it as follows:

Philippians: An Outline

- I. THE JOYS OF PARTNERSHIP (Ch. 1:1-11)
 - A. Paul and his Partner: A Greeting (ch. 1:1-2)
 1. The Partnership is for mission (v. 1)
 2. The Partnership is in Christ (vs. 1-2)
 - B. Paul and his Partners: A Prayer (Ch. 1:3-11)
 1. They were his joy in the past (vs. 3-5)
 2. They are his beloved friends now (vs. 7-8)
 3. He is confident of their future (vs. 6, 9-11)
- II. THE JOYS OF ADVERSITY (Ch. 1:12-30)
 - A. The Advantages of Opposition (ch. 1:12-18)
 1. Imprisonment can help the gospel (vs. 12-14)
 2. Even church division has its uses (vs. 15-18)
 - B. The Hope of Deliverance (ch. 1:19-26)
 1. Our hope is in Christ (vs. 19-21)
 2. Our deliverance is for others (vs. 22-26)
 - C. The Christians' Part in Victory (ch. 1:27-30)
 1. Be moral (v. 27)
 2. Be united (v. 27)
 3. Be brave (v. 28)
 4. Accept suffering (v. 29)
 5. Be involved (v. 30)
- III. THE JOYS OF UNITY (Ch. 2:1-11)
 - A. The Call to Unity: Be One (ch. 2:1-2)
 - B. The Prerequisite of Unity: Be Humble (ch. 2:3-4)
 - C. The Secret of Unity: Be in Christ (ch. 2:5-11)
 1. The power is in Christ (v. 5)
 2. The example is Christ (vs. 6-11)

IV. THE PURSUIT OF UNITY (Ch. 2:12-30)

- A. The Responsibility of Unity (ch. 2:12-13)
- B. The Marks of Responsibility (ch. 2:14-18)
- C. Leadership for Unity (ch. 2:19-30)
 - 1. Timothy, the missionary partner (vs. 19-24)
 - 2. Epaphroditus, the local leader (vs. 25-30)

V. WARNINGS AGAINST THREE THREATS TO UNITY (Ch. 3:1-21)

- A. Against Self-Righteous Legalists (ch. 3:1-11)
 - 1. Rites are nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 1-3)
 - 2. Race is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 4-7)
 - 3. Our righteousness is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 8-11)
- B. Against Self-Satisfied Saints (ch. 3:12-16)
- C. Against Self-Serving Sinners (ch. 3:17-21)

VI. FINAL APPEALS FOR JOY AND UNITY IN CHRIST (Ch. 4:1-23)

- A. Appeal for Unity (ch. 4:1-3)
- B. Appeal for Joy (ch. 4:4-7)
- C. Concluding Remarks (ch. 4:8-23)
 - 1. The Christian's Mind (vs. 8-9)
 - 2. The Christian's Resources (vs. 10-23)

STUDY HELPS

1. Read together Acts, Ch. 16.
What three segments of society were represented by the first converts in Philippi? What segments of society is your church reaching? Does it miss any? Why?
2. How did Paul and Timothy make use of Roman influences in Philippi for the advantage of the Gospel? Applying this lesson to ourselves list ways in which we might take advantage of social change in our own society for the sake of our revolutionary faith.
3. Review the reasons for Paul's great interest in Philippi. What can we learn from him in terms of strategic planning? Where are the most important centers for Christian mission in today's world?
4. List the reasons why our age is called "The Anxious Age." As you begin to read Philipians, jot down any Christian answers to these specific anxieties which you may find.
5. Locate and begin to familiarize yourselves with some of the following commentaries and study books:

William Barclay, The Letters to Philipppians, Colossians, Thessalonians.
Edinburgh, St. Andrew Press. 1959.

The Layman's Bible Commentary, vol. 22. A.M. Hunter, Galatians, Ephesians, Philipppians. Richmond, John Knox Press, 1959.

The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 11. Philipppians, Colossians. N.Y.,
Abingdon Press, 1955.

The Moffatt N. T. Commentary. J.H. Michael, Philipppians. London, Hod-
der and Stoughton, 1928.

Paul S. Rees, Paul in Philipppians: The Adequate Man, Westwood, N.J.,
Revell, 1959.

Carroll E. Simcox, They Met at Philippi, N.Y., Oxford U. Press, 1958.

And some of the following Bible versions: Revised Standard, Phillips'
Modern English, New English Bible, Moffatt's, K. Taylor's Living
Letters.

6. If you are interested in further information on the world of Paul's day, see S. Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius; or S. Angus, The Environment of Early Christianity, or the Pelican paperback, R. H. Barrows, The Romans (esp. pp. 10-11; 59-69; 89-92; 179-184).

APPENDIX FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE DEEPER, HARDER BIBLE STUDY

1. You will need a good Concordance, or at least a Bible with a concordance included. Pick out the five most important Bible passages on Joy, which you can find outside Philipppians.
2. If you have a Topical Concordance, see what you can find in the Bible about Anxiety, Fretfulness, Worry.
3. Who are some of the important women mentioned by name in the New Testament Church? What was the place of women in the life of the community of believers? Read Luke 1:5-38; Luke 2:36-38; Luke 10:38-42; John 12:3-8; Acts 9:36-41; I Tim. 2:9-14; II Tim. 3:6-8; I Peter 3:1-6. How do you reconcile what these passages say about women in the Church with Paul's statement in I Cor. 14:34?
4. Make your own outline of Philipppians, Chapter 1.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT STUDY PERIOD

1. Read Philipppians through at one sitting. If possible, read all four chapters every day for thirty days.
2. Read the next chapter in the Study Guide.

THANK GOD FOR PARTNERS

Philippians 1:1-11

As the Apostle Paul begins his last letter to his friends in the church at Philippi, three things soon become evident. He is very much concerned about something. He is absolutely committed to someone. And he is quite happy about almost everything. Such a mixture of concern, commitment and joy is a remarkably fine combination of mental and spiritual attitudes for any Christian in any age.

At first, in his opening words of greeting, it is the note of commitment that dominates, but indirectly woven in is also something of the concern and the joy.

Philippians 1:1-2. Slaves, Saints and a Partner.

"Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ . . . to all the saints in Christ . . . at Philippi . . . Grace . . . and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

(Note: The text here and below will be condensed for quick reference and rapid sequence. Compare it with the full text in your Bible.)

1. The first strong word in the letter is "servant." Literally it means "slave," as if the first thing Paul wants to make dramatically clear is his absolute commitment to Jesus Christ. His letter is many things: a hymn of joy, a thank-you note, a love letter to a church, a lesson in missionary strategy, and an apostolic plea for Christian unity. But Paul begins where joy and thanksgiving and love and mission and unity must all begin. He begins with Jesus Christ.

Before he has so much as finished the first words of greeting he has named the name of Christ three times and triple-stitched into the opening fabric of the epistle a monogram, as it were--a sign of the underlying secret of all that he wants to say to Philippi about unity and joy. So the letter opens with this rapid repetition of "the name," reminding the Philippians of three fundamental facts of the Christian life. J. H. Michael summarizes them thus: "our relation to Christ ('servant of Christ'); our state in Christ ('saints in Christ'); and our blessings from Christ ('grace and peace from . . . the Lord Jesus Christ')." ¹ Slavery, sainthood and bless-

¹ J. H. Michael, Philippians, in the Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 1.

ings may be a singularly unattractive blend of ideas to most modern readers, but everything that Paul is about to say to the Philippians is rooted in a right understanding of those three words.

The slavery of which Paul speaks is not the abject, crawling thing that human masters make of it. Paul's only "slavery" is absolute obedience to and total possession by Jesus Christ, his Lord and God. It is complete selflessness and utter loyalty. This is the slavery that makes men free. In the Old Testament it brought men to their feet before kings as "servants of God," and prophets. "The Christian man," said Luther, "is most free lord of all, and servant to none; the Christian man is most dutiful servant of all and subject to everyone."

The sainthood (literally, holiness) of which Paul speaks is not the stained-glass window kind. "Saint" is the ordinary New Testament word for Christian. It means "holy" but not "holier-than-thou." It is a little more like an honorary degree than an earned one, in that it does not imply a perfection achieved, but a position bestowed and a responsibility to be kept. That position is "in Christ," which is Paul's key phrase in the description of what it means to be a Christian. Its meaning will become more clear as it recurs throughout this letter. Here he calls the Philippians "saints" not because he thinks they are without fault--he will soon be rebuking them for some of their shortcomings--but because when they are "in Christ" Christ's holiness begins to be theirs.

The blessings are Grace and Peace. Here Paul makes a beautiful new Christian greeting out of the common Greek salutation, "Grace," and the old Hebrew greeting, "Peace." But more important, he sums up in those two short words the joy and power of a new faith that breaks down the barriers between Jew and Greek. Grace is not the languid, rather effete word that we make of it today. Basically, it is the undeserved favor which God shows to man. It is God's "active love," as P. T. Forsyth puts it. There is power in it: God's power for man's weakness. And there is joy in it: God's joy for man's sorrow. The result is peace, which is all from God, for no man has joy and peace and power from himself.

2. Not so obvious in these opening verses, but very much on the apostle's mind, as later parts of the letter will show, is his concern for the unity of the church. The first hint of it, perhaps, is a faint stress on the word "all." Paul has had word of divisions among the Christians at Philippi, but he plays no favorites. He reminds them that they are all one in Christ, and greets "all the saints in Christ . . . at Philippi."

The theme of unity is introduced in another and particularly graceful way by Paul's first three words: "Paul and Timothy . . ." It was Paul's letter, not Timothy's, but with these first words the old pioneer lifts up his junior missionary colleague into full partnership and commends him to the church. He guards against any opening wedge of division between the

older and younger generations. Paul is Christ's slave, and Timothy's partner.

Philippians 1:3-11. Completing the Partnership.

"I thank . . . God in all my remembrance of you, . . . making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. . . . I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion . . . I hold you in my heart . . . I yearn for you all . . . And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and . . . discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and . . . be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits ~~with the fruits~~ of righteousness which come through . . . Christ."

In the words of greeting (vs. 1-2) Paul made clear his relation to Timothy his partner, and to Christ his Lord. Now, beginning with verse three he makes equally clear his relationship to the Christians at Philippi. They are not just converts and followers. As surely as Timothy, they too are his partners in mission, and the thought moves him to words that are lyric with joy and affection. The past, the present and the future all move across his mind as he prays for them.

1. The past fills him with joy (vs. 3-5). "I thank my God . . . with joy, . . . for your partnership in the gospel from the first day to now," he writes. The King James Version has "fellowship in the gospel," but the Revised Standard Version is better, for what moves Paul to joy is the memory of "their common participation with him in spreading the gospel." (Expositors' Greek Testament.) For a missionary like Paul there is no greater joy than when the convert becomes a partner.

My father, who was a pioneer in Korea, singled out as his moment of most intense joy on the mission field the day he commissioned the first Korean to volunteer for missionary service. Sixteen years earlier, entering North Korea he had faced a mob in the streets of Pyongyang. Out of the back alleys they poured to stone the "foreign devil." One of the men who tried to kill him that day was a young tough named Yi Kui-Poong. Sixteen years later, in 1907, father found himself facing Yi Kui-Poong again. This time it was at the first meeting of the first Presbytery of the new Korean Presbyterian Church, and father, as the moderator, was about to commission its first missionary--Yi Kui-Poong, who had been converted, trained and was now ordained for mission on remote Quelpart Island. We call this a "new day in mission," as the younger churches join with us in full partnership in the work of reaching the whole inhabited earth for Christ. But it is not new. It is a pattern as old as Philippi.

What was Philippi's "partnership in the gospel"? Paul refers to it again at the end of his letter. "When I left Macedonia," he says (ch. 4: 15), "no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only, for even in Thessalonica you sent me help." The Philippian church was not only the first in Europe, historically and geographically, in so far as we have record; it was also the first to move from the receiving to the giving stage. It supported Paul financially.

2. The present is full of love (vs. 7-9). We would expect a man in prison to be praying to get out, but not Paul. His prayer is filled not with the anxieties of the moment but with its blessings. Where we would pray, "Help, Lord, I have problems," Paul prays, "Thank you, Lord, I have love." An undercurrent of deep affection between Paul and the Philippian Christians ripples its way all through the letter. The words almost trip over each other, as twice in as many verses Paul tells the Philippians how he loves them. "I hold you in my heart . . ." (v. 7). "How I yearn for you . . ." (v. 8). It would all be shallow and excessively sentimental did not the apostle reveal the deeps from which his love wells up: the grace of God (v. 7), and the love of Christ (v. 8). Partnership in grace sweetens the partnership of work with love. And, as another apostle put it, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." (I John 4:18.) Love is one of the best Christian answers to anxiety.

3. The future is sure (vs. 6, 10-11). The future holds no more anxiety for Paul than the past or the present. "I am sure that he who began a good work in you," he writes, "will bring it to completion." But just how realistic was Paul's confidence? Where is the church in Philippi today? Ten feet underground! I have seen pictures of the plain of Philippi: tumbling wall, a heap of stones where archaeologists have scratched away the dust of centuries, a column standing bare and broken against a line of snowy hills. That is all. There is no church left.

We spoke of communist myths, in the introduction; there are Christian myths as well. One of them is that churches cannot be destroyed; that however fierce their persecutors may be, God's promise stands firm, "The gates of Hell shall not prevail . . ." That promise is true, but it must not be interpreted naively and unbiblically. It is a misunderstanding both of God's promise and of Paul's confidence to imagine that any church anywhere is indestructible. God's promise is to the Church, the whole Church, not to individual churches, and like the sign of Noah's rainbow, though it stands as assurance against total disaster, it is no guarantee of local immunity. There have been many floods since Noah's day, and many churches have been wiped out since our Lord made his promise to his Church. It happened to Philippi, and it can happen again.

Was the apostle's confidence, then, nothing but wishful thinking? Not at all. His confidence is in the One who began the good work, in Jesus Christ, not in those in whom the work is done. He loves the Philippians but he

knows better than to put his hope for the future in any man. The future belongs to God. The church in Philippi may be gone, but the Church of God has circled the world.

There is, however, a hint in history that even the Philippian church did not disappear without first playing its part in mission and in victory. Origen, writing about one hundred and fifty years after Paul's death, says that the Clement mentioned in Phil. 4:3 is Clement of Rome. This may well not be so, for Clement was a common name and we have only Origen's word for it five generations after the fact. But I like to think that Origen may be right, and that the little church in Philippi, first fruit of Paul's mission to Europe, took its partnership with him in that mission so seriously that when at last the great apostle laid down his life a martyr for the gospel in Rome, his beloved Philippians sent from their small number a missionary to take his place, Clement, "whose name is in the book of life," writer of the earliest Christian document known outside the New Testament, Clement's Letter to the Corinthians. What a fitting answer to Paul's confidence that "he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion," and to his prayer "that your love may abound . . . filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through . . . Christ, to the glory of God."

Note the last words. At the end, as at the beginning, Paul's confidence for the future rests not in his partners but in his Lord.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is Paul's definition of a saint? (See Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 4:12; II Thess. 1:10.) How does that compare to the popular use of the word today?
2. What three "unities" do you find in the first two verses?
3. What is the difference between "concern" and "anxiety"?
4. Barclay points out ten kinds of joy which are described in Philippians: the joy of Christian prayer, the joy that Jesus Christ is preached, etc. Begin to spot the reference and make your own list, as our study continues.
5. How often does Paul repeat the words "you all" in this section? What does this suggest?
6. In what sense will God bring to completion his good work in us, not only as a body of believers but also as individuals?
7. As Paul turns from song to supplication in v. 9, what kind of love is he referring to? What does the word "abound" mean? What is the implication in this prayer that their love may abound more and more? See Rom. 5:5.

8. What is the significance in Paul's prayer that their love may also be rich in knowledge and all discernment? Note the balance between love and enlightenment. Is there a difference between love and sentimentalism? How, in Matt. 9:27-31, for example, did a natural and good reaction become the enemy of the best?
9. What are the fruits of righteousness? (See Gal. 5:22-23.) See if you can, by contrast, name some of the fruits of self-righteousness.
10. Look up information on "partnership in mission" and today's changing missionary patterns.

APPENDIX FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE DEEPER, HARDER BIBLE STUDY

1. Meaning depends on grammatical structure as well as on vocabulary. Note the importance of the connectives in this passage. Pick out these connectives and study the meaning and flow of thought in the passage as revealed by them; e.f. the "and" in v. 1; "to," v. 1; "with," v. 1; "inasmuch," in v. 7; "that," v. 10. What do the connectives tell us about the difference between "approve what is excellent" in Phil. 1:10 and the same phrase in Rom. 2:17 f.?
2. There are two references to the "Day of Christ" in this section. What does Paul mean by the phrase? See I Thess. 3:12-13; Matt. 24:29 ff.; I Cor. 15:24-25; Rev. 11:15; John 6:38 ff.
3. For a good ecclesiastical debate, investigate why Presbyterians derive comfort from the reference to bishops (plural) in Phil. 1:1. See also Titus 1:5-7, and Bishop Lightfoot's commentary, Philippians on this verse, p. 193 f.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Read Acts, Chs. 21-28.
2. Read Chapter 3 in Study Guide.

Chapter 3

THE JOYS OF ADVERSITY

Philippians 1:12-30

The first paragraphs of Paul's letter have been full of normal joy in work to do, and the friends and partners with whom to do it. But Paul's situation was not normal as the Philippians knew very well. In fact they were so concerned about him that they had sent one of their church members, Epaphroditus, to see what could be done about his desperate position.

But Paul turns the tables on them. Epaphroditus had come to comfort him; now he sends him back with this letter to comfort them. (Phil. 2:25-30.) It seems that they are far more anxious than he is. He is in prison, but he is deliriously happy. He uses the word "joy" or "rejoice" over and over again--thirteen times in this one short letter.

Some may have thought him more delirious than happy. Anyone can rejoice in friendship and love and a chance to work; it is quite another thing to rejoice in adversity. How can he be serious? He says first, for example (in vs. 15-18), that he rejoices about the situation he faces in Rome. But he is under lock and key, and outside his cell in the city of Rome the church has split in two with anxious, rival evangelists preaching only to cause Paul more trouble. "So I rejoice," he says. It seems absurd.

Second (in vs. 19-26), he rejoices at the prospect of deliverance from prison. This would make more sense, except that the odds were already turning ominously against him. It is impossible to know exactly the date when Paul wrote this passage, but it was probably about the time of the death of Burrhus, commander of the Praetorian guard. Burrhus was the last good commander of the guard under Nero. He may have been responsible for Paul's rather lenient treatment up to that time. But when Burrhus died, a tiger took his place, the hated Tigellinus, debaucher of the Emperor's own sisters and the worst of Nero's creatures. So with Burrhus dead or about to die Paul's best chances of freedom were already gone. Yet he wrote, "I shall rejoice."

Joy under such circumstances was madness. But Paul was not "under the circumstances," he was "in Christ"; and when life closes in, as Paul now explains to the Philippians, the difference between despair and hope is Christ. Perhaps as he writes his mind goes back ten years, and he remembers that there was a prison in Philippi once too. They had tried to keep a missionary there, a missionary who refused to act like a prisoner, who refused to

recognize defeat, who sang songs in the night. And after the hymns, and after the earthquake, it was the prison-keeper, not the prisoner, who tried to commit suicide. And it was the prisoner, not the prison-keeper who opened the doors--the doors to eternal life..

Philippians 1:12-18. Profiting from Opposition.

"I want you to know . . . that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known . . . to all . . . that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made . . . much more bold to speak the word of God . . . Some indeed preach Christ from envy . . . not sincerely . . . thinking to afflict me . . . but others from good will . . . out of love . . . What then? . . . Whether in presence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and . . . I rejoice."

Kierkegaard remarks somewhere, "For practical purposes, it is at the hopeless moment that we require the hopeful man . . . Exactly where hope ceases to be reasonable, it begins to be useful."¹ That almost describes Paul in prison, but not quite. Kierkegaard is a bit too much of an irrationalist. Not Paul. There is nothing unreasonable about his joy. His joy was Christ.

1. He rejoices in imprisonment because of Christ (vs. 12-14). Why? Because his arrest, which was supposed to be a set-back to the cause, instead has suddenly focussed attention on the faith and all at once the name of Christ is being heard everywhere in Rome. Christianity thrives on opposition. "The blood of the martyrs," said Tertullian centuries ago, "is the seed of the church," and it is still true today as the communists begrudgingly admit. "Religion is like a nail," complained the Russian Lunacharsky. "The harder you hit it, the deeper you drive it into the wood."

2. Unfortunately not all the opposition was coming from outside the church. Yet Paul can rejoice even in church division because of Christ (vs. 15-18). It may come as a shock to find the apostle in this passage virtually condoning separatism and rejoicing in the splintering of the sects. The truth of course is that it was not the division that made him glad. The secret of his joy was his supreme confidence in his Lord whose name, when preached even in faction and church partisanship, speaks with such compelling power that it can convert and save.

This passage was a comfort to John Calvin during the distressing divisions of the Reformation. No one worked harder than he to heal those

¹ Works of Love, quoted in Interpreters Bible, Philippians, p. 35.

divisions, but he failed. Refusing to be discouraged, however, he took heart from Paul's example at Rome and wrote, in his commentary on these verses, "Hearing that that impure dog, Carolus, was scattering the seeds of pure doctrine, (we, like Paul) gave thanks to God because he had made use of that most profligate and worthless villain for his glory." There is a little too much gritting of the teeth at the opposition, perhaps, in the old Reformer, but at least he had found the secret of Christian joy even in the midst of division.

Philippians 1:19-26. Alive or Dead -- Christ's!

"Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of . . . Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, . . . and . . . now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. . . . My desire is to depart and be with Christ. . . . But to remain . . . is more necessary on your account. . . . (So) I shall remain . . . for your progress and joy . . . that in me you may . . . glory in Christ. . . ."

Paul's third reason for joy is his hope of deliverance. This would seem to require less explanation than his joy in imprisonment and his joy in division, but it is not quite what it seems. True, he speaks of coming to Philippi again (v. 26), but he is too much of a realist not to know that his only release from prison may be the deliverance of death. He is, however, magnificently unconcerned. The three great passions of his life have utterly obliterated all concern for himself. These are his love for Christ, his love for others, and his love for his work.

1. Christ comes first. He is the key to all joy in adversity. In one of the greatest verses in the whole Bible Paul puts it thus: "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (V. 21.) There is a modern echo of that apostolic affirmation in the words of a Korean martyr shot by the communists. Unshakable to the end he said simply to his murderers, "Alive or dead I am Jesus Christ's man." When a man is "in Christ," nothing in life or in death can change the relationship or shake the position. Then life loses its anxieties and death all its terrors. The man who is not prepared to die, someone has remarked, is not prepared to live.

2. Paul's second passion in life was his love for others. He is so busy caring for them he has no time to worry about himself. Verse 20 suggests that a pronouncement of death has come to him, but immediately he is more concerned about what this may mean to his friends than about what it will mean to him. So with exquisite grace he prepares them for any eventuality. He would be glad to die, he assures the Philippians, for death would only bring him nearer to the Lord he loves. Only his love and his feeling of continued

responsibility for them makes life preferable to death. Whatever lies ahead of him, therefore, he will accept with joy. The future frightens only the man or woman who lives for himself.

3. The third passion of Paul's life is his work. So great was his joy in it (v. 22) that not even the frustrating interruptions of arrest and imprisonment could annoy him for long. He could move no farther than his chain, but he was forever planning ahead, mapping out new missionary journeys. The next one, he says (v. 26), will bring him through Philippi. But like any good general, Paul has alternative plans. What if he is not released? In that case, says Paul, in the final paragraph of this first chapter, the battle is up to you Philippians.

Philippians 1:27-30. Getting into the Fight.

"Only let your . . . life be worthy of . . . Christ . . . whether I come . . . or (not) . . . Stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith . . . and not frightened . . . by your opponents. This is a clear omen . . . of their destruction. . . . For . . . you should not only believe in him (Christ) but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict which . . . (is) mine."

Paul has just told the Philippians that the hope of the future is in Christ. It is no real help, however, to anxious, troubled people to throw a Christian truth at them, and tell them that if they will only believe it all will be well. Christian victory is not won by platitudes, and Christian truth must be put to work or won't work. So Paul does not let truth wither away into platitudes for lack of application. Having revealed the secret of victory, Christ, he goes right on to point out that the Christian must play his own part in that victory.

He is writing to a soldier's town and he puts it in vivid military language. He tells the troops to shape up, close ranks, be men, endure hardship and engage the enemy. The stress is on five important Christian duties:

1) Right conduct ("let your manner of life be worthy"). There is no room in the Christian life for orthodoxy without ethics. More than one church has been split by Christians trying to excuse themselves for ethical lapses by their theological orthodoxy. Paul would not tolerate such a travesty of the faith. He says as clearly as James that "faith without works is dead." The progress of thought in all his epistles runs directly from doctrine to conduct.

2) Unity ("one spirit . . . one mind"). This is the first direct plea for unity in the epistle, but it will become the central theme in the next chapter, and it was implicit in this chapter from the first "and" of the

first verse. Paul had conceded in vs. 15-18 above that factionalism cannot destroy the gospel. Now he begins to qualify that concession. It is no less true, he reminds the Philippians, among whom some signs of discord were appearing, that Christian unity is imperative for Christian victory. Division cannot defeat, but it can prevent victory.

3) Courage ("not frightened . . . by your opponents"). The courage spoken of here is probably courage of conviction, not physical courage. Open persecution had not yet begun. But Philippi was an idol-worshiping town, and the opponents referred to were in all probability idol-worshippers demanding compromises from the "one-God" Christians. "Stand firm for your convictions," Paul tells his people. Ethics without orthodoxy is as wrong as orthodoxy without ethics.

4) Suffering. Paul makes no empty promises of easy, bargain-rate salvation. As it took Christ's suffering for us to win us our salvation, so it should come as no surprise if we are called upon to suffer for him. With characteristic resilience Paul looks on this kind of suffering as a gift, not a burden. "It has been granted to you . . . (to) suffer." (v. 29.)

5) Involvement ("engaged in . . . conflict"). Twice in this paragraph the apostle indicates that the Christian life is not withdrawal from the world, but involvement in it. In the plea for right conduct in v. 27, the verb literally means "be worthy citizens," or in other words, "take your right place in civic affairs." That is the positive side. Christians are to stand up and be counted in community action for justice and order and right. There is also a negative side. Like Paul, we may be drawn into conflict and suffering. This is not to be shunned as unchristian. It is part of the engagement, the involvement. The long line of Christian involvement in history runs straight from Philippi to Selma.

Philipps paraphrases the last verse of the chapter thus: "It is now your turn to take part in that battle you once saw me engaged in . . ." Paul knows he is nearing the end of his fight and like an old soldier turning over the command he writes this last letter to his partners, the Philippians. It is part of the joy of struggle, and part of our hope of victory that there are those who will carry on where we leave off.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature of the opposition encountered by Paul and what use does he make of it in developing his message in Chapter 1?
2. Look up some other Bible references which teach us that a Christian lives above the circumstances. (For example, John 16:16-20; James 1:2. Find others.)

3. If you were writing a paper on Phil. 1:15-18, what title would you give it?
4. What does Paul mean when he says in ch. 1:19, "for I know that this will result in my deliverance"? What does the word "this" refer to? What kind of deliverance is he expecting?
5. Paul seems to have a conviction that the prayers of the saints are one of the two factors in his deliverance. What other evidence is there in Scripture for the importance which God places on believers' prayer for the achievement of divine purpose?
6. There are prisons of the mind as well as of the body. To what fears, jealousies and opposition in present-day America does Paul speak?
7. What kind of practical involvement are Christians called into today?

APPENDIX FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE DEEPER, HARDER BIBLE STUDY

1. How did Paul happen to be in prison in the first place? (Refer back to Acts, Chs. 21-28.)
2. What was the Praetorian Guard? (Phil. 1:13.) See also ch. 4:22. What does it indicate about the spread of the gospel?
3. Write your own paraphrase of ch. 1:19-30.
4. Make a study of what the Bible means by "suffering for his sake" (v. 29). See Matt. 16:24; II Tim. 2:12; II Cor. 4:17; Heb. 11:25; I Peter 4:1; etc.
5. The vital interrelationship of orthodoxy and ethics in Paul's teaching is emphatic. Separating them and emphasizing either the one or the other has resulted in a number of dangerous trends in the Church through the centuries and even in our time. Find out what some of these are.

ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter 4 ^{the} in/Study Guide.

A MIND FOR JOY

Philippians 2:1-11

Paul now comes to the heart of his letter. His call to battle, to involvement and to mission in the closing paragraphs of the first chapter leads him inevitably to a call to unity; for mission demands unity, and unity proceeds out of mission.

Bishop Azariah, the saintly evangelist of South India and the first Indian ever to become an Anglican bishop, tells of an interview he had with Dr. Ambedkar, leader of India's untouchable millions, the harijans, the outcastes. It was back in 1935. Dr. Ambedkar was about to forsake Hinduism. "Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease," he had said. Bishop Azariah hoped he would bring his millions into the Christian faith. "Your people, deeply religious, cannot live without a religion," said the bishop. "It is not enough to give up Hinduism. They must have something else." He offered them Christianity. Dr. Ambedkar replied, "I am well aware of all that the Christian church has done for the outcastes, but we Harijans are one community all over India, and our strength is in our unity. Can you in the Christian church offer us any unity comparable to that?" And the bishop was silent.

Since Christian mission so often demands unity for evangelistic effectiveness, it is no accident that Paul the missionary writes to Philippi pleading for unity. But he begins with a more personal plea. Your unity is my joy, he writes, so "fill up my cup of happiness" (New English Bible), "complete my joy" (RSV), and be one. A mind for joy is one mind in Christ.

Philippians 2:1-2. The Call to Unity.

"If there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, . . . complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love . . ."

Just what it was in Philippi that called for this appeal we can only conjecture. Perhaps it was a personal quarrel between two members of the church, as the reference in Phil. 4:20 seems to indicate. It was not doctrinal division, as in Galatia, or moral weakness as in Corinth, but rather some form of jealousy or personal ambition. To check such lack of concord before it breaks into open schism, Paul writes this moving appeal for harmony. He bases his appeal on two great cornerstones.

1. Union in Christ. Again that important phrase appears, in Christ. "If there is any encouragement in Christ . . ." He begins with Christ and bases his whole appeal for unity on the actual union of the believer with the body of Christ. "Union with Christ," Paul is saying, "demands unity in Christian life." Appeals to church unity which begin anywhere else but with "union in Christ" are rootless and baseless.

2. Love. "If any incentive of love . . ." The first appeal is objective, ~~our~~ union in Christ; the second is warmly subjective. It is an appeal to that sympathetic love of the brethren which is characteristic of real Christians. Love is the best word to describe the Christian God. He is Love. Love is the best word to describe the Christian religion; it is love of God. And love is the best word to describe the Christian way of life; it is love of our fellowmen.

Unity in the church, then, is built on these two cornerstones: our union in Christ, and our love for each other. If either of these is missing we cannot say we love God and are not rightly in the church at all (I John 4: 16-20). The rest of the verse only repeats the lesson in other words. "Participation in the Spirit" is another description of "union in Christ"; and "affection" and "sympathy" are aspects of love. These are the foundations of unity in the church.

But what about doctrine? Is that not also basic to union? Yes, but it is dangerous to try to read too much into any one passage. Paul is not talking about church reunion after a schism. He is rather forestalling a division. He is talking to a single congregation, undivided by heresies, and the basis of unity in such a group is precisely as he describes it: oneness in Christ, and love toward one another. Given these two basics, it is for Christians "to live together in harmony (and) live together in love, as though (they) had only one mind and one spirit between (them)" (Phil. 2: 2, Phillips).

That is easier said than done. How are Christians actually to work out such happy harmony? Having told the Philippians what to do, Paul now proceeds to tell them how to do it.

Philippians 2:3-4. The Prerequisite of Unity.

"Do nothing from selfishness . . . but in humility count others better than yourselves. . . . Look not only to (your) own interests, but also to the interests of others."

This is the second step in Paul's appeal. First, be united. Second, if you want to be united, be humble. This is what the church should be like, a community where nothing is done in selfishness or conceit, but where in humility each thinks more of others than he does of himself. "A marvellous community," exclaims one commentator, Lenski, "in which no one is looked down upon, but every one looked up to."

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But how often humility, which is the indispensable ingredient in Christian living, becomes the missing ingredient in the way we actually live. "When I look back upon my own religious experience," says Andrew Murray in his little book, Humility, "or round upon the Church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at the thought of how little humility is sought after as the distinguishing feature of discipleship of Jesus. . . . Alas, how much proof there is that humility is not esteemed the cardinal virtue, the only root from which the graces grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus. . . . Meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief marks by which those who follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God are known."

I wonder how much of the tensions between churches, and between Christians, or between Christians and non-Christians, is caused by this lack of humility in Christians. I was badly jolted one day when a Korean said to me, "You Americans are always so proud. And even if you weren't, I wouldn't believe it, because if I had all you had I'd be proud myself." If that is the handicap we work against, how much harder we must strive to be humble.

Again, easier said than done. We cannot go around muttering fiercely to ourselves, "Be humble. Be humble." It does not work. If humility is so necessary, if it really is the mark of discipleship and the secret of unity in the church, then what in the world is the secret of humility, for that is the secret we need.

X
Paul once found himself in just such a cycle of frustration. He described it to the Romans, "I don't understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? . . ." (Rom. 7:15, 18, 24). But the answer comes at once, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:25). The answer is always Christ. The secret of humility is Christ. "Be united," Paul urges. "How?" we ask. "Be humble," he replies. "How?" "Be in Christ," says Paul as he now begins to unfold the final secret of unity and joy.

Philippians 2:5-11. The Secret of Unity.

"Have this mind . . . in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. . . . He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This great passage is the glory of the epistle. It is a description of the humility which can be ours when we are in Christ, who is both the power and the example for our pursuit of that elusive virtue.

1. The power (v. 5). The usual interpretation of this difficult verse is to take it as an appeal to the example of Jesus Christ. That is the sense of the King James Version, and that sense is not at all foreign to this passage. The example is there, as we shall see. But the example is not enough. It has been pointed out by a theologian in India that the example of Christ is not an ordinary Pauline pattern of thought. M. Hollis writes; "(Paul) does not argue that Christians can do something because Jesus has done it, in the sense that what man has done man can do."¹ He is more radical and dynamic than that. What Paul says over and over again is that Christians can do what was before impossible because they are "in Christ," new men in Christ. "The humanly impossible (humility, unity) is possible because they are in Christ."¹ X

The New English Bible translates the verse, "Let your bearing toward one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus." In other words, let your mutual relationships be governed not by your natural minds, your old nature, but by the new nature, the mind which is yours in Christ. The power is in Him. It becomes ours when we are in Him.

2. The example (vs. 6-11). This is one of the most profound Christological passages in the whole Bible, but Paul uses it not to teach theology, so much, as to teach a very practical truth about Christian living in a very practical situation. It is a lofty passage used to teach a lowly truth, humility.

It may also be the very first Christian hymn. The style stands out sharply from the casual manner of the rest of the letter. Every phrase is measured, every word exact and balanced. To catch the flavor of the original, read Milton, not the Bible's English prose.

"That glorious Form, that Light insufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heavn's high Council-Table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksome House of mortal Clay."

("On the Morning of Christ's Nativity") X

¹ M. Hollis, "A Further Note on Philippians 2:5" in The Indian Journal of Theology, VII, 4, 1958.

It is more than a hymn, however, it is a three-point sermon on the person and work of Jesus Christ. First Paul sweeps us back to the beginning of time for an exceedingly rare glimpse of Christ before he came to earth, the pre-existent Christ. Next he focusses on the hinge of history, the incarnation. Finally he moves on majestically to the end of time and Christ's exaltation. Why all this just to teach humility?

a. The pre-existent Christ (v. 6). Paul begins with Christ before he came to earth because it is this that gives ethical meaning to the example. It is precisely because Christ was God that his becoming a man and a servant had meaning. There is no humility in a man being a man, or a servant being a servant. There is even less humility in a man becoming God as some modern hereysies about Christ would have it.

Christ was God. That is where Paul begins. "He (Christ) was in the form of God," he writes. It is only in the English that his language is ambiguous. The Greeks had two separate words for form. One refers to outer, changing shapes, as when "a cloud takes the form of a mountain" (Interpreters Bible). That is not the one used here. Paul uses the other word, morphe, which is the kind of form that expresses what the object really is. If Christ has the form of God in this sense, then God is what he really is. Phillips translates it, "He who had always been God by nature . . ."

b. The incarnate Christ (vs. 7-8). He who had always been God . . . became man. The Lord of Glory took "the form of a servant." Once again the word "form," though Paul uses the weaker word here, the word for "outer shape." This in no way implies a "reverse unitarianism," that is, that Jesus was not really a man but was just God masquerading like a man. There are some branches of the Coptic Church which do in this way, virtually deny the real humanity of Christ, but they have become isolated, introverted, superstitious and selfish--an object lesson on what will happen to any church which forgets that God really did become a servant. It simply ceases to be relevant. The deity of Christ makes the humiliation ethical; the incarnation makes it relevant. This is why, in 1956 a committee of the World Presbyterian Alliance, meeting in Prague to choose a theme for the 18th General Council in Sao Paulo that would be as relevant to Christians on one side of the curtain as the other, finally picked out this passage. They linked it with Isaiah, ch. 53, and John, ch. 13, and chose as the theme for the Quadrennium, "The Servant Lord and His Servant People."

What does it take to become a "servant people"? Will giving up our luxuries do it? When the Communists rolled over us in Peking knowing what propaganda use they made of our "capitalist affluence" we tried to simplify our living standards. One of the most warm-hearted missionaries I have ever known outdid us all. He got rid of his furniture, his rugs; he ate the simplest of food, wore his oldest clothes. When the first communist soldier came into the house, Hal welcomed him into the bare rooms. "We are here to serve, not to exploit," he tried to indicate. The little soldier smiled

and looked at his shoes. That was all; he just looked at his shoes. And Hal finally looked down at his shoes too and his heart sank. His were leather; the soldier was wearing frayed old canvas tennis shoes.

It is not the things we give up that count for humility. Humility is in the heart. We need not argue too much, therefore, about what it was that Christ emptied himself of, in Phil. 2:7. His glory? His omnipotence? Paul would brush all that aside as idle speculation. "He emptied himself," is what Paul says. He poured himself out in utter self-sacrifice for us, as water is poured from a vase; and at the end he died for us.

This was the climax of humiliation, the cross (v. 8). In Philippians, the phrase "death on a cross" takes on a specially moving intensity. For Paul was a Roman. The Philippians to whom he was writing were Romans, too, citizens of a colony with special Roman rights. Neither Paul nor the Philippians could ever be sentenced to death by crucifixion. It was too humiliating a death for a Roman. But not too humiliating for our Servant Lord. What an example! He suffered for the Philippians a death they could never be asked to suffer for Him. And what does He ask in return? Humility. It is as important as that, this secret of unity.

c. The exalted Christ (vs. 9-11). First the cross; then the crown. After the climax of humiliation comes a climax of joy, as the final section of Paul's picture of the whole Christ falls into place. It is as if Paul had chosen to paint the picture as a triptych, a great three-panelled screen. Note the curious construction. Two of the panels are shining gold, while the center panel, which is in the place of honor, is made of wood, old blackened wood, at that, the wood of a cross. On the first side is the pre-existent Christ in glory: gold and ivory. In the center is the incarnation: "out of the ivory palaces" to death on a wooden cross. But the third panel is shining gold again: the exaltation, which is Christ's reward.

Reward is a dangerous thought to add to an appeal to humility. Rewards can corrupt humility and destroy unity and turn joy into sorrow more quickly than any persecution. Some, therefore, have gone so far as to say that the idea of reward does not belong in the Christian faith. They are unusually against punishment, too. But there is no such unreal world. Rewards and punishments are facts of life. Of course they can be misused. So can food and sex and liberty and love. The answer to their abuse is not their abolition but their proper use.

When God rewards, the reward is just. It is not self-sought or self-bestowed. Quite the opposite. Christ came to suffer, not to be exalted. "Christ empties Christ," observes Bengel; "God exalted Christ."^① The Lord came to be a servant; therefore he has been made Lord.

He has been given, also, "the name which is above every name" (v. 9). Even in non-Christian lands where the Christian faith is sharply attacked and the

① J.A. Bengel, Grammar of the New Testament, by James Bruce, ed. T. J. Clark, Edinburgh, 1823, vol. 4, p. 134

Church is often persecuted, men are usually careful not to criticize the name of Jesus. The Communists try to use the name, rather than attack it. Their propagandists labor to capture Jesus for the revolution. "He was a carpenter's son," they say, "a working man, the first martyr of the revolution, crucified by the imperialists." There is still such power in the name that even the enemy tries to borrow something of its power.

And we who bear the name, how much of its power do we carry?

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the three great causes of discord and disunity suggested by Phil. 2:3-4?
2. People who are most in earnest about their beliefs are sometimes most prone to factionalism. Why? Does Paul, therefore, call for reduced conviction and commitment as an aid to unity? Name four or five considerations or appeals set down by Paul for the prevention of disharmony.
3. The early Christians had a one-sentence creed. See if you can construct a brief creed of your own from ch. 2:5-11.
4. What is humility? Hitler said it was no virtue at all but a weakening vice. How would you answer him?
5. Jesus is called the Servant Lord. What does the paradox mean? Why are both sides of the paradox important?
6. What does Christian service require of us?
7. What is the difference between Christ as power and Christ as example?

APPENDIX FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE DEEPER, HARDER BIBLE STUDY

1. Make a study of specific examples of Christ's humility in the Gospels. (Matt. 11:29; Luke 2:4-7; Luke 2:51; Matt. 13:55; Luke 9:58; Matt. 9:10-11; Matt. 20:28; John 13:5; and many others.)
2. Where is Christ's deity most clearly taught in the Bible? See, for example, Heb. 1:3-6; Col. 2:9; John 14:9; Matt. 1:23; John 1:1; John 20:28; I Tim. 3:16. Find others.
3. Where is Christ's humanity most clearly taught? Begin with Matt. 13:55; John 1:14; Gal. 4:4; I Tim. 2:5.

4. For a more thorough study of the meaning of the key phrase, "in Christ," read James S. Stewart, A Man in Christ, Harpers, N.Y., especially Chap. IV, pp. 147-203.

ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter 5 in the Study Guide.

THE PURSUIT OF UNITY

Philippians 2:12-30

The great hymn has thundered to its close, and with verse 12 Paul abruptly comes back to Philippi. He leaves the future, with its vision of the Lord in cosmic triumph, and returns to the persistent problems of the present. There is still a little trouble in Philippi.

At once the apostle is all business. The lyric mood is over. Stern and affectionate by turn, he first lectures the Philippians like an Old Testament prophet, then chats with them like a friend.

Philippians 2:12-13. Responsibility for Unity.

"Therefore . . . as you have always obeyed, so now . . . in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you . . ."

With his first word Paul indicates that though the mood has changed, he is still writing about the same subject, unity in the church. The hymn is over, but the "therefore" in verse 12 resumes the appeal to the example of Christ's humility which is the key to unity.

The stress is on the element of obedience in that example. As Christ was obedient (v. 8), so now you must be obedient (v. 12), he says. Then, as Christ's obedience brought exaltation, you may expect that your obedience will bring salvation. This puts the responsibility squarely where it belongs, on them. Do not depend on me any longer, he is saying; depend on yourselves. "Work out your own salvation."¹

But what a shocking phrase to find in a letter from Paul! If there is anything the Christian can not do in Paul's gospel of grace, it is work out his own salvation. To the Galatians, to the Romans, to all his churches he has written time and again to warn against the fatal illusion that salvation can be earned. "O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? . . . Did you receive the Spirit by works . . .?" (Gal. 3:1-2.) How can he now calmly turn his back on everything for which he had fought so vigorously, and teach the Philippians work-righteousness?

¹ See Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, London, p. 116.

Some Bible scholars suggest that the apostle must have caught his own mistake and hastily corrected it in the next verse. Having written "work out your own salvation," he stops, recovers himself, and quickly changes the subject of the verb. Not "you work," but "God works in you."

No, Paul means both. "You work" and "God works." The next chapter will make quite clear that Paul has lost none of his fire against the salvation-by-works heretics and that he has not abandoned free grace or salvation by faith. But neither has he abandoned an equally important doctrine, the doctrine of human responsibility. Paul does not try to resolve the paradox between man's free will and God's determining will. He teaches both, as if confident that parallel truths like parallel lines, though they may not be brought together on earth by finite minds, will nevertheless meet in the infinity of the life hereafter.

There is not as much of a paradox in these verses, however, as might be thought, if we read them in context. The subject is obedience and unity, not salvation. The "work" Paul is urging on the Philippians is simply the kind of obedience to God that comes from humility and leads to unity. In other words, obedience like Christ's. This was the whole point of the great Hymn of Christ's Example. And the "salvation" of which he speaks is not the goal of the work, not even its direct result--the direct result was death. Salvation is a reward, and in the case of man, as Paul makes very clear elsewhere, it is an unearned reward, a free gift (Eph. 2:8-9).

The balance between "work out your own salvation" and "God is at work in you" has been put this way: "You work out what God works in." This puts the weight on the right side of the partnership, but the truth is deeper than that. Paul is not drawing up a legal contract, with footnotes spelling out just what part is God's work and what part is man's. His thought rather is of a spiritual union, a blending of wills. It is the other side of his favorite phrase, "in Christ." When we are "in Christ," then God is "in us." "For God is at work in you . . ."

Surely, here is the place for a shout of joy. God is with us! Why does Paul speak instead so soberly of "fear and trembling"? The phrase conjures up memories of harsh Puritan preaching, of Jonathan Edwards and soul-shaking sermons like "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Actually it is only to the modern mind that the fear of God seems incompatible with joy; and Edwards! God is nearer to Paul's than the "sweet little old somebody up there" of today's pop theology. But in this case Paul is not speaking of God's anger. His reference is rather to God's cooperating presence. The fear of which the verse speaks, therefore, is not terror at God's anger, but that proper sense of awe which man must not lose in the presence of the Almighty.

There is a place in life for the right kind of fear. A man who goes into battle without proper fear will never make a good soldier. A man who comes

before God without the proper fear will never make a good Christian. Christians who presume on the promise of God's presence to claim a first-name, hand-holding, buddy-buddy relationship with Deity do not really know in whose presence they stand. This is the God who answers by fire (I Kings 18:24); the thunder of whose power no man can understand (Job 26:14). He knows the secrets of the heart (Ps. 44:21) and all things are naked and open before Him (Heb. 4:13). There can be no easy familiarity in such a presence, but vigilance, rather, and awe and reverential fear. Sir Edmund Hillary, conqueror of Everest, says that every minute he is on a mountain he is afraid, but now that he has learned to live with fear, it no longer paralyzes. It only keeps him keen and alert. In this kind of fear there is no dismay, but a fierce joy and a strange attraction that draws the climber back again and again to the mountains. So it is with the fear of God. There is no terror in it for the Christian, but confidence and joy and a strange attraction that draws him with reverence into the very presence of God.

Philippians 2:14-18. The Marks of Responsibility.

"Do all things without grumbling . . . that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God . . . in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that . . . I may be proud Even if I am to be poured as a libation upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice . . . Be glad and rejoice with me."

Paul continues his lecture on Christian unity by outlining four further marks of obedient, responsible Christians.

1. They get along with their fellow Christians. Do not grumble, or argue or question one another's motives, says Paul. These were the signs of disunity that tore apart the children of Israel in the wilderness and delayed for so many years their entrance into the Promised Land. Petty personal differences and rivalries can tear a church apart as fast as theological differences. In fact the letter is often used only as an excuse for a division that was actually caused by the former.

2. They are an example to non-Christians. A Korean proverb runs, "It takes only one fish to muddy a whole stream." For one person's lapse, a whole congregation can be blamed; for one congregation's disunity the whole church can be discredited. So "be blameless," says Paul, and "shine like stars in a dark world" (Moffatt's translation). But what kind of shining example is a divided church? "A world lying broken and half-dead on one side of the road," said Dr. Walter Horton, "will not be helped much by a church lying broken and half-dead on the other side."

3. They hold the faith. The "word of life" of which Paul speaks, is the gospel, the good news about Jesus Christ. Christians are both to hold it

fast and hold it out--the word Paul uses can mean either. There is unity in holding to the center, to Jesus Christ who is the Word of Life. But holding to the center will propel us to the ends of the earth, for unity is for mission and for giving the Word of Life to the whole world.

4. They are expendable. The paragraph closes as we might by now expect of Paul with a familiar combination: a note of personal affection, a realistic look at his own desperate position, and a burst of improbable joy.

The apostle has been asking a good deal of the Philippians, lecturing at them like a preacher. Now he speaks to them as an old friend. It may be a lot to ask, he is saying, but do it; do it for me. I may not be with you much longer, and I can die happy if only I know that you are faithful. Once again the old warrior looks death in the face and is unafraid. He uses a figure of speech unfamiliar to us, but readily understood in a city like Philippi with all its pagan altars. The picture is of a cup of wine poured out upon the offering at the altar as a libation at a pagan sacrifice. The Philippians' faithfulness is their offering. Paul's death is only the cup of wine which crowns the sacrifice, and he offers his own blood as that wine, not at all spalled at the prospect. For he is expendable; it is their faithfulness that counts.

This is the final mark of Christian responsibility: to be expendable. We are Christ's expendables, says Paul, so let us all rejoice!

Philippians 2:19-30. Leadership for Unity.

"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him. . . . They all look after their own interests. . . . But Timothy's worth you know, how as a son with a father he has served with me . . .

"I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and . . . fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need . . . He was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him . . . So receive him in the Lord with all joy; and honor such men; for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete your service to me."

It has been suggested by some that Paul here comes to the main purpose of his letter. Disturbed by reports of disunity, he determines to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to mend the rifts in the Philippian church, and writes this letter to assure them of a proper reception. This does not quite ring true to the tone of the letter. Paul's confident hope that the Philippians themselves, by God's grace in them, will close ranks and "work out their own salvation" does not suggest an urgent need of outside leadership.

Nevertheless, leadership is important and Paul does indicate that he expects much of Timothy and Epaphroditus. His descriptions of the two men are an illuminating lesson on what the greatest leader the Christian mission has ever had looked for in his fellow workers when he was picking leaders.

1. Timothy, the missionary partner (vs. 19-24). Timothy is Paul's closest and most trusted associate. He calls him a son. In a very helpful study of Philippians, The Adequate Man, Paul Rees catches the spirit of Paul's description of Timothy in a quick, alliterative outline: He is sympathetic, "genuinely anxious for your welfare." He is selfless, "I have no one like him . . . They all look after their own interests . . ." He is seasoned, "You know his worth . . . as a son with a father he has served with me . . ." The word for "worth" is used of tested metal.

Ultimately all three of the above characteristics are only aspects of the one indispensable condition for Christian leadership. It has already been described by Paul at the beginning of this chapter (ch. 2:3). Moffatt translates it, "never acting for private ends." Timothy is anxious only for others, the one kind of anxiety permitted in the Christian. He is the model of the Christian leader because he is concerned for others, not himself; his thought is only for the cause of Christ, not his own interests; and he works with his partner, not alone.

2. Epaphroditus, the local leader (vs. 25-30). We might say in terms of today's missionary partnership, that Timothy was the missionary and Epaphroditus the national worker. Timothy came from outside, though he was part Greek; whereas Epaphroditus belonged to the Church of Philippi. He was probably one of its pastors, and had come bringing a gift from the congregation to help Paul in prison. Like Timothy he has the marks of Christian leadership: sympathy, "distressed because you heard that he was ill"; seasoning, "fellow-worker and fellow-soldier"; and selflessness, "risking his life to complete your service . . ."

It is no discredit to his missionary colleague, Timothy, that Paul singles out Epaphroditus for special mention. "Honor such men," he says. Too often the heroism of the national worker is unhonored and unsung. Everyone knows of the missionary martyrs of the Boxer rebellion. One hundred eighty eight men, women and children were killed and "there is no record of a single attempt at recantation or wavering of purpose," says the historian, Professor Latourette. But more than 1900 Chinese Protestant Christians were killed by the Boxers. Theirs is the greater honor. They could so easily have escaped. When Pastor Meng, the first Chinese ordained by the North China Mission of the American Board (Congregational), heard that the missionaries were in danger, instead of fleeing for his life he went straight to the city to help them. He insisted on keeping the preaching chapel open even when the Boxers closed in, ordering his oldest son to escape so that someone would be left to carry on the work, but staying himself at the post

until he was tortured and killed.² He belongs with Epaphroditus on Paul's honor roll.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why is unity so important in Christian mission? Is it any less important in the church at home?
2. What are the principal causes of disunity in the American Church? What are some signs of its unity? Is there a proper place for denominationalism?
3. One commentator finds five marks of the Christian in Phil. 2:12-16. Make your own list from these verses.
4. What special traits in Paul's character do his remarks about Timothy and Epaphroditus reveal?
5. Where else do we find reference to Christians as lights in the world? What is the source of this light?
6. Verse 28 contains another of Paul's answers to anxiety. What is it?
7. What kind of obedience is Paul asking for in v. 12?

APPENDIX FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE DEEPER, HARDER BIBLE STUDY

1. a. Look up Timothy's background: I Cor. 4:14-17; Acts 16:1-5; Acts 19:22.
b. What do the following references tell us about Timothy? II Tim. 1:5; I Tim. 5:23; I Cor. 16:10; I Tim. 4:12; II Tim. 2:22; II Tim. 1:8; II Tim. 3:10; I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:2; ~~I Cor. 16:10~~; Rom. 16:21.
2. Make a study of other Biblical passages pointing to obedience as a necessary response to God's free gift of Grace. Begin with Gen. 12:1-4; Jer. 7:23; I Sam. 15:22-23; Acts 5:29; Heb. 5:9; Rom. 6:16-18; and Heb. 11:8.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Read Chapter 6 in ^{the} Study Guide.
2. Read the Book of Galatians.

² K. S. Latourette, A History of Christian Missions in China. N.Y., p. 517.

Chapter 6

THREE THREATS TO UNITY

Philippians 3:1-21

The third chapter of Philippians begins as though Paul is ready to sign and seal the letter and send it off with Epaphroditus. He cannot end, however, without a final summons to joy. "Finally," he writes, "rejoice in the Lord." It is not anxiety about his troubles, but joy in Christ that has been the theme of the whole letter so he mentions it now again at the end.

Then, suddenly and so abruptly that some scholars have questioned whether the next paragraphs belong in the original letter at all, Paul breaks out into a blazing attack on enemies which he fears could split and divide his beloved Philippians. The enemies are his old adversaries, the Judaizers, but before he has finished with them he has warned the church about two other dangerous tendencies which could destroy its unity in Christ. The chapter, therefore, divides itself into three warnings: 1) against legalism (vs. 1-11); 2) against perfectionism (vs. 12-16); and 3) against libertinism (vs. 17-21).

Any one of the three can destroy Christian unity, so this group of warnings is no real interruption of the train of thought in the letter. It is rather a continuation of Paul's plea for unity through humility. Each warning is a condemnation of some form of that self-righteous pride which is the very opposite of humility. Legalism is pride in keeping the law. Perfectionism is pride in oneself. Libertinism is pride in breaking the law.

There is therefore no sufficient reason to doubt that this section is an integral part of Paul's letter to Philippi. It reveals more of his personal life and inner spirit than any other single part of his writings. As for the abrupt transition, his style is always swift and mercurial. It would take only a chance word dropped about the Judaizers, or the passing thought of the defenselessness of the little church in Philippi now that he can no longer protect it in person, to start his quick mind off in a new direction. At any rate, whatever the reason, he cannot bring himself to say farewell without these three final admonitions.

Philippians 3:1-11. Self-Righteous Legalists.

"Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. . . . Look out for the dogs, . . . for the evil-workers . . . who mutilate the flesh. . . . We are the true circumcision,

who worship God in spirit, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh. Though . . . if any man thinks he has reason for confidence . . . I have more: circumcised . . . a Hebrew born of Hebrews; . . . a Pharisee, . . . a persecutor of the church, . . . under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. . . . I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God . . . that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, . . . that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

Just before the beginning of his mission to Europe and his first visit to Philippi some thirteen years earlier, Paul had fought and won one of the most decisive battles in church history. His defense of Christian liberty at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts, ch. 15) was a turning point in the whole course of Christian thought. His opponents were the Judaizers. It was only natural that among the early Christians many were unable to see how radically the coming of Christ had changed the entire pattern of man's relationship to God. Jewish themselves, and reared in Judaism, the foundation of their thinking was still the Mosaic Law. It was inconceivable to them that one could become a Christian save on this foundation. The issue was simple. Must a man become a Jew before he can become a Christian? Yes, said the Judaizers, he must first submit to the Jewish initiatory rite of circumcision. No, said Paul. There is only one foundation, Jesus Christ, and any man is free to come to him directly, not through Moses. He appealed to the apostles in Jerusalem. And there, in a decision that changed the tide of history, the council stood solidly with Paul for liberty.

To have that victory questioned now at Philippi makes Paul's anger rise, and his language thickens. Bluntly, almost brutally, he slashes out at those who would divide the church and take it captive again into the bondage of the law. "Dogs," and "self-mutilators," he calls them, and zeroes in on their central error. The first and fatal mistake of legalists is a smothering concern for the non-essential. In the case of the Judaizers it took the form of obsessive concern with Jewish rites and race and legal righteousness. These, therefore, are what Paul attacks. What the Judaizers falsely insist are the essentials of the faith, he exposes as only the externals. What counts is Christ, he says.

1. Rites (vs. 2-3). Circumcision is nothing, he argues; Christ is everything. His appeal is from ritual circumcision to true circumcision. He echoes a truth that not even his Judaizing opponents can deny, for it comes from the Old Testament, namely, that genuine circumcision is more than a cutting of the flesh; it is a "circumcision of the heart" (Deut. 10:16). The

gospel does not begin with the body and its mutilation; it is of the spirit. We worship God in spirit, says Paul, and glory not in ceremonies, but in Christ.

2. Race (vs. 4-7). Jewishness is nothing, Paul continues; Christ is everything. The narrow concern of the Judaizers for rites and ceremonies was only a symptom of a more serious ill. Its deeper and fiercely dangerous root was racial pride. Paul's attack on this evil is devastating, for he strikes at it from within. An outsider's criticism they could dismiss as jealousy. But all that was so precious to them in their Jewishness, Paul already had and more. He ticks off his claims to pure membership like a Klansman adding up his 100% Americanism, then icily brushes it aside as dirt with the contempt it deserves.

His appeal is from racial Jewishness to true Jewishness, and from racial Israel to the true Israel. Perhaps the suggestion came from his traveling companion in Philippi, Luke, whose gospel, as a recent commentary points out,¹ takes as its central theme the assertion that the "true Israel" is Christ. The man "in Christ" is more truly Jewish, therefore, than mere circumcision can ever make him. What makes a man a true Israelite? A primitive surgical rite? Proud and proper birth? Fanatic, narrow zeal? Pharisaic rectitude? I had all that and found it empty form, says Paul. The truth, the essence, the "incomparable worth" is Jesus Christ.

3. Legal righteousness (vs. 8-11). Human righteousness is nothing, Paul says; Christ is everything. His appeal is from the righteousness which comes from keeping the Law, to true righteousness which comes through faith in Christ. It has been said that these verses contain the clearest statement of the doctrine of justification by faith in Scripture. It was Rom. 1: 17 that caught at Luther's heart and sparked the mighty Reformation, but the same truth is even more simply and clearly brought into focus here. In fact, Phil. 4:9 is a one-sentence summary of the whole Epistle to the Romans.

The contrast is between work-righteousness and faith-righteousness. Luther, as a monk, knew only the former. "You must earn your salvation," his friends told him, repeating the error of the Judaizers. So the young professor would go home at night from his lectures and beat himself in his room until the blood ran. Then, fearing that mortification of the flesh might not be enough for salvation, he threw himself into works of mercy and went about doing good. A plague came to the town. Monks, students and faculty scattered to safety and begged him to fly with them. Luther refused. "My place is with the sick and dying," he said. "I am afraid of death, but there are things worse than death." He was thinking of hell. Surely, he thought to himself, if I die doing good works and caring for the sick, even the All-Terrible God will grant me the sweet mercy of forgiveness. But he

¹ E.J. Tinley, The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible: Luke. Cambridge, 1965.

did not die, and not even in good works did he find a sense of forgiveness. He still suffered the torments of the damned.

Then, one day in May, he began to prepare some lectures on Paul's epistles. "He who through faith is righteous shall live," he read in Romans, and all at once and so strongly that he believed it was the direct work of the Holy Spirit, he saw that the righteousness which means forgiveness, the righteousness for which he had worked so painfully, was not his to be worked out at all. It comes not by works but by faith. It is the free gift of God's love. Man is not saved by doing good, but by simple trust in Christ, like the thief on the cross. Goodness is the result of salvation, but never the cause of it.

Paul closes his blistering attack on the legalists' counterfeit Christianity with a short and moving summary of what it really means to be a Christian. It means not to count on our own goodness, but to accept by faith Christ and his true righteousness. And it means to receive more than His righteousness; it means also to receive His power and to share His sufferings. What an unusual combination. Power and suffering. Yet this is what it will mean to be a Christian. Do not expect the power without a share of the suffering. But also, do not be anxious about the suffering, for there will be the power to bear it. And the end is not death, but joy, the joy of the resurrection.

Philippians 3:12-16. Self-Satisfied Saints.

"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. . . . One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to that which lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature be thus minded . . ."

Paul's condemnation of the legalistic self-righteousness of the Judaizers is withering and complete, but honesty compels him to add a sharp reminder to Christians. Self-righteousness is not limited to Pharisees. There is Christian self-righteousness as well, even among the "saints." It rests on the false assumption that since by faith Christ's righteousness is ours, nothing further can be required of us. "In Him" we are already perfect and sinless.

Such a passive, self-satisfied forgery of the Christian faith is given short shrift by the apostle. He attacks it from within, as he did against the legalists, but much more gently and indirectly. He uses the simple device of describing his own Christian experience, and the comparison with smug Christian perfectionists becomes embarrassingly clear. Not even Paul the apostle dares to claim he has reached perfection.

Paul's strenuous, never satisfied, restless, reaching faith is as different from the backward-looking self-righteousness of pseudo-perfectionism as a race is from a testimony meeting. The real saint as Paul describes him is more like an athlete than an angel. He has a race to be run and a future to be won. The past is gone, and is better forgotten than continually dredged up for past experience of grace with which to bolster Christian pride. The perfection of which Paul speaks never lies in the past. It is never quite achieved; it always lies ahead. The word means full maturity. The prize toward which he presses is that complete Christianity that is always just beyond the grasp until Christ who has already made us his own (v. 12) calls us up at last to be with him (v. 13).

Philippians 3:17-21. Self-Serving Sinners.

"Join in imitating me, . . . for many . . . live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him . . . to subject all things to himself."

If there is anything worse than a self-righteous Jew or a self-righteous Christian, it is a self-righteous sinner. There are more such than might be imagined--inverted Pharisees whose delight in damning the pietists for pride in being good pushes them into the opposite trap, pride in being bad. "Glorying in shame," Paul calls it (v. 19), and it is the worst kind of self-righteousness. The Pharisee praying, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as this publican," is the classic example of self-righteousness. But how much worse, someone has suggested, is a publican praying, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as this Pharisee."

Self-righteous legalism is a hardening of the Christian arteries, a rigidity that destroys freedom, and it is wrong. But just as wrong is the kind of perpetual Christian adolescence that mistakes its first taste of liberty for the abolition of law, and defines freedom as permission to sin. It is not the legalist's righteousness that is wrong; it is his self-righteousness. Jesus himself warned the disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

So Paul reminds self-indulgent Christians, "whose god is their belly," who have turned the liberty of the gospel into license, that though there is no salvation in the law, there is still law in the gospel. "We are a colony of heaven," he says (in Moffatt's splendid translation of Phil. 3:20), and does more than contrast thereby the earth-mindedness of the libertine with the higher ideals of the Christian. To Philippi, a colony of

Rome with all its pride in Roman law, the phrase would come as a reminder that heaven has its disciplines as well as its privileges. Romans were free by law; yet Romans were under law. So Christians are free by grace, but under discipline. 'If, in a secular state, liberty has its responsibilities, how much more in "a colony of heaven."

Note the contrasts by which Paul sets off Christians (vs. 20-21), from willful sinners (vs. 18-19). Their God is their belly; ours is a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Their minds are in the dirt; ours are in heaven. Their glory is shame; ours is the glory of Christ's resurrection power. Their end is destruction; we look with hope to the end of time, for Christ shall come again.

It is on this note that the chapter ends. Paul has turned from warnings to promise, as if he fears that his stern injunctions against so many kinds of error might leave his friends confused and anxious. But there is no reason for the Christian to be anxious about sin. He has a Savior. There is no reason for him to be anxious about anything. His Savior is "master of everything that is" (v. 21, Phillips).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. List the reasons why Paul could be rightfully proud of his Jewish heritage. What were the dangers involved in it?
2. In the Church today rites and ceremonies can be both a help and a hindrance to our understanding of Christian truth. Explain.
3. What is Christian maturity as Paul teaches it here? How does it differ from perfectionism?
4. When Christians reject legalism, what kind of Christian disciplines remain? What is "the law still in the Gospel"? See how many of the Ten Commandments you can find repeated in the New Testament.
5. What is the distinction between Christian liberty and license? What does Paul mean by those whose "god is their belly"?
6. What does Paul mean by "knowing Christ"? How does he amplify this in terms of profit and loss?
7. What does verse 17 tell us about Paul as a teacher? Why does he remind his Philippian friends that "our commonwealth is in heaven"? (v. 20).

APPENDIX FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE DEEPER, HARDER BIBLE STUDY

1. Two years ago the Bible study was on Galatians. Review your study of legalism as presented in that epistle. How does it compare with Phil. 3:1-11?
2. Make a study of "righteousness" as taught in the Bible. What is the righteousness we are to seek? (See, for example, Rom. 10:1-4; Luke 18:9-14; Isa. 45:24; Phil. 3:6-8; Matt. 5:6; Eph. 4:22-24; Gal. 2:20-21; Gal. 3:21; Rom. 3:20-24; Rom. 9:30-32; Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:6; I Cor. 1:30; Rom. 4:13. Using a concordance, continue your study.)

ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter 7 in the Study Guide.

FINAL APPEALS

Philippians 4:1-23

Once again Paul is ready to finish the letter, and once again so many things crowd into his mind that the farewell stretches on and on as if he cannot bring himself to say goodbye to ones so dear to him. Love crowds in between every word of the first verse of this last chapter.

But Christian love is not blind, as Paul proves when he proceeds at once to rebuke his beloved Philippians for a break in their unity. Like the love of God, who loved us "while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5:8), Paul's love for his friends in Philippi is not lessened by his awareness of their faults. Out of such understanding love pours his final appeals for unity and joy in Christ.

Philippians 4:1-3. Women, unite!

"Therefore, my brethren, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm . . . in the Lord . . . I entreat Euodia and . . . Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you . . . true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest . . . whose names are in the book of life."

One of the minor fascinations of this passage is the mystery of the names. For sixteen hundred years people have been speculating about the identity of Euodia and Syntyche and the "true yokefellow" and Clement. Who were they? One delightfully dubious old tradition has it that Syntyche was not a woman but a man, and who else but the Philippian jailer! The same source identifies Euodia as his wife, which reduces the whole problem in Philippi to the level of a domestic spat. More romantically, some have guessed that the "true yokefellow" is Paul's wife and none other than Lydia, his first convert in Europe.

But happy fantasy aside, it is now well accepted that Euodia and Syntyche were two leading women in the Philippian church, perhaps deaconesses. Paul's tribute to them--they "labored side by side with me in the gospel"--is a mark of the significant standing of women in the early church and particularly at Philippi. Women in Macedonia seemed to enjoy a higher social position than in almost any other part of the ancient world. Macedonian

cities were erecting public monuments in honor of prominent women at a time when Greece as a whole was shockingly notorious for its degradation of the role of women in society. The best wife, a Greek historian had said, is the one who is least heard of. But in Macedonia, building on the more favorable attitude to women there, the Christian church took some of its earliest steps toward what has been called its noblest social triumph, the elevation of the status of women.¹

Nowhere else in the whole record of Paul's missionary journeys do women occupy so remarkable a place in the life of the church as at Philippi. Three women were among its founders, Lydia, Euodia, and Syntyche. The name of a fourth, Stratonike, the wife of Apollophanes, is found in a very early but apocryphal document, the Acts of Paul. They were the vanguard in a long line of pioneer women who worked "side by side" with the apostles and prophets in the propagation of the gospel.

There is Phoebe, for example, a deaconess "who ministers to" the church at Cenchraea (Rom. 16:1); and Prisca, a missionary (a woman apostle!) leader of a small church in Rome (Rom. 16:3-5). There is Priscilla, who converted and instructed Apollos, one of the best educated and socially prominent leaders in the earliest church. (Chrysostom deduces this from the fact that she is named before her husband in the record, Acts 18:24-26.) One whole book of the New Testament, the Second Epistle of John, is addressed to a woman. By the second century Christian literature is full of references to women teachers and missionaries, like the famous "apostle" Thecla at Iconium, and during the great persecutions the roll of the saints and martyrs was filled with more than a proportionate share of women's names. Among the better classes, women of wealth and social position clearly outnumbered the men in the church.

There seem to have been two orders in the early church for women: deaconesses and "widows." The deaconesses had almost a ministerial function, serving where men could not properly minister in that age, such as in the baptism, instruction and supervision of the women of the church. The "widows" on the other hand, were essentially Christian social workers, as in I Tim. 5:10. One very early document, the Apostolic Church Order, directs that every church should maintain three widows, of whom two should be devoted to prayer while the other is to be a sick-nurse.²

It is a melancholy fact that the two women leaders at Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche, would probably be unknown to us except for their quarrel. What a contrast between the first mention of women in that church (Acts, ch. 16), and this second mention here. It was women at prayer who gave the

¹ Lightfoot, Philippians, London 1913, p. 55f.; see also S. Angus, The Environment of Early Christianity, London 1931, pp. 44ff.

² See C. Biggs, The Origins of Christianity, Oxford 1909, p. 268f.

Philippian Church its foundation; it is women quarreling who now threaten to shatter that foundation and destroy its unity. The more important women become in the life of the church, the more important becomes the purity and unity of their lives together in Christ. But it is reassuring to note that there was still no open break, no schism, and Paul is confident that with the help of their fellow Christians, including the "true yokefellow" (who was, perhaps, the husband of one of the two), the breach will be healed and harmony restored. So again he says, "Rejoice!"

Philippians 4:4-9. Worry about Nothing; Rejoice in Everything.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer . . . with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and . . . minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, whatever is true, . . . honorable, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . gracious, if there is any excellence, . . . anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have . . . heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you."

Paul has three important things to say in this passage about the deep roots and wide reaches of the joy that drives out fear and calms anxiety.

1. It is, first of all, a joy that begins in Christ (vs. 4-5). Note how easily and naturally Paul works into his plea for harmony and joy a reminder that it takes more than a turning to each other to restore Christian unity in God's people. Three times he repeats the seminal phrase, "in the Lord": "Stand firm in the Lord" (v. 1); "Agree in the Lord" (v. 2); and now again, "Rejoice in the Lord" (v. 4). He is a good teacher. Repetition enforces the lesson he has already taught in chapter two that the power for Christian joy and unity comes not from man but from Christ, from being "in Christ." So sure is Paul of this power that he can dismiss the shadow of the quarrel from his mind, depending on Euodia and Syntyche to demonstrate openly what they already have in Christ, namely, the gentle and forgiving spirit which Paul calls "forbearance" (v. 5).

In that confidence the apostle turns again to the joy that never fails him, joy in the Lord, and adds the happy shout of the early Christians which was their watchword and signal, the last word on the lips of the martyrs as they faced, with a joy their persecutors could never understand, the beasts and the fire and the sword. "The Lord is at hand." "Maranatha." He is with us now; and He will come again. So what is there to fear? Rejoice!

2. It is a joy without anxiety that grows by prayer (vs. 6-7). There is indeed absolutely nothing for the Christian to be anxious about, says Paul.

In his book, The Adequate Man (p. 111), Paul Rees quotes a physician's analysis of the "worries" he was called upon to treat as patients. "Forty percent worried over things that never happened. Thirty percent of the worries analysed were related to past matters which were now beyond the patients' control. Twelve percent were anxious about their health, although their only illness was in their imagination. Ten percent worried over their families, their friends or the neighbors, although in most cases there was no substantial basis for the fears that were causing trouble. Just eight percent of the worries seemed to have some basis in conditions that needed to be remedied."

Paul's answer to all such anxieties, real or imagined, is, Take them to the Lord in prayer. That has a dangerous sound to it, to be sure. It could be just another pious platitude, except for the vitalizing little phrase which is attached to it: "with thanksgiving" (v. 6). Pray thankfully, says Paul, not anxiously, not adding to all your other anxieties by wondering how long it will take God to do all you are asking him to do. Paul does not promise that God will do what you ask. All he ever promises is that God hears prayer. But for the privilege of access to the very throne of God who would not be thankful, and who can fail but find peace in His presence? The verse that follows (v. 7) has brought more peace to more troubled minds than all the psychotherapy in the world, rightfully important though psychotherapy is even for Christians. There is somehow a healing, tranquil power even in the simple repetition of the verse: "The peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." This is Paul's promise from the Spirit to the anxious. Perhaps in English the words are almost too soothing. Paul's actual language is almost military. There is no weakness in it, but power. "God's peace shall stand sentry, shall keep guard over your hearts," is how Bishop Lightfoot paraphrases it.

3. It is a joy that delights in every good thing (vs. 8-9). In verse eight, Paul moves from the world of a Judaeo-Christian benediction into the clear, cold world of Greek philosophy. The list of virtues which he begins to enumerate is pure Greek. This is rare for Paul, who was all Jewish, and a little Roman, but Greek only around the edges. He was raised, however, in a Greek university town, and he was writing to a church in Greece, and he was no narrow iconoclast. All that was good in Rome he was willing to use for the gospel. Perhaps he is reminding his converts here that all that is good in Greece, too--all the truth and riches of the highest philosophy the world has known outside of Christ--this too can be used for the gospel.

There is a change in the language and in the atmosphere, but there is no real break in the continuity of thought. Paul has spoken, in verse 7, of the peace of God which keeps our minds in Christ Jesus. This is its protection and its source of strength, but the language might also suggest a restricting confinement. As if to correct any such misapprehension, in the next verse Paul begins to describe the high, free horizons of the Christian

mind. It delights in all the greatest virtues, the loftiest goals that man anywhere and anytime has ever conceived: (1) Truth, the goal of science and philosophy; (2) Honour, the highest prize of human ethics; (3) Justice (or righteousness), the aim of law and religion; (4) Purity, the supreme virtue in personal morality; (5) Loveliness, and all that is best in art (though the word refers more to personal charm than abstract beauty); and (6) Graciousness, or praiseworthiness, which is the mark of a good reputation, the highest honor society can bestow.

Paul sums up the whole list of virtues in two words, "excellence" and "praise," and thereby baptizes with his blessing all that is good and praiseworthy in this world wherever it may be found. The Christian's mind need run in no restricted ruts. It has its disciplines, and it is to be kept "in Christ," but it is free to rove the whole wide world to seek out beauty and truth and goodness.

"Believe; don't think," says the frightened Christian, but it is not the Bible speaking. "Believe, and think," says Paul. "Think on these things," as I do. "And the God of peace will be with you."

Philippians 4:10-20. A Word of Thanks and a Lesson in Contentment

"I rejoice in the Lord . . . that now . . . you have revived your concern for me . . . Not that I complain . . . for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. . . . I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. . . . When I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you . . . Not that I seek the gift; but the fruit which increases to your credit. I have received full payment, and more . . . from . . . the gifts you sent . . . And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God the Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

This is Paul's thank-you note for the gifts from his converts in Philippi. What a masterpiece of letter writing! Who but Paul could thank a donor for his gift so graciously, all the time telling him he really didn't need it. No one but Paul could do it, perhaps because no one but Paul saw so clearly as he the glorious paradox of the Christian life. It is a life on two levels. Paul was in prison, but at the same time he was in Christ. The Philippians were to be good citizens of Philippi (ch. 1:27, where the word "worthy" refers to citizenship), but they were also citizens of heaven (ch. 3:20). This may be a paradox but it is not a contradiction. The final secret of contentment, Paul tells his anxious age, is to learn to live on two levels, not in tension, but in peace.

The paradox of the two levels, as well as the resolution of the paradox in Christ, is pointed up in the sharp contrast between a verse at the beginning of the letter and another here near the end. "Paul . . . (a) slave of Jesus Christ." That is how the letter begins. But it closes with that slave asserting, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (v. 13). Only a slave, but he has unlimited power. The New Testament way to power and joy and contentment and peace is to become the servant, the slave, the captive of the Servant Lord.

"Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword, and I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms when by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms, and strong shall be my hand.

"My heart is weak and poor until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure--it varies with the wind.
It cannot freely move tillthou hast wrought its chain;
Enslave it with Thy matchless love, and deathless it shall
reign."

The Hymnal, #247

On one level of life Paul was a prisoner in Rome and a servant of Christ and of all Christ's people. On this level he needed help and needed it desperately. When the Philippians responded in love to his need, his gratitude was as genuine as their love. That level, the level of need, is as real and inescapable as hunger and thirst and sickness and death.

But there is another level, the level of needs supplied (v. 19), of anxieties quieted (vs. 6-7), of utter contentment (v. 11), and of power overflowing (v. 13). At this level Paul had no need of human gifts, and no more wants. He had learned to be content.

This part of the letter, as J. H. Michael points out, is inseparably associated with Oliver Cromwell. As the Great Protector began to weaken of the sickness that was to cause his death, he called for a Bible and asked that Phil. 4:11-13 be read to him. He listened, and said "This Scripture did once save my life; when my eldest son died; which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did." And then repeating the words of the text himself, and reading the tenth and eleventh verses, of Paul's contentment and submission to the will of God in all conditions, -- said he: 'It's true, Paul, you have learned this and attained to this measure of grace: but what shall I do? Ah poor creature, it is a hard lesson for me to take out! I find it so!' But reading on to the thirteenth verse, where Paul saith, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,' -- then faith began to work, and his heart to find support and comfort, and he said thus to himself, 'He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ too!' And so drew waters out of the well of Salvation."³

³ T. H. Michael, Philippians, p. 217, quoting Carlyle.

Paul's Christ is our Christ, and by Him, says Paul, "God will supply your every need." The key word is supply. Scientists tell us the real problem is not resources but supply. There is enough food in the world for all if man could only distribute it. There is enough power in the sunlight falling on the Arizona desert to keep everybody in the world warm and to turn all the dynamos on earth, if we could only harness and distribute it. All the anxieties of the world center in the unbridged gap between these two levels of life--between need and abundance, weakness and power, want and contentment. The lesson of Philipians is that the gap has been bridged by Jesus Christ. He crossed the gulf. God became Man, becoming poor that we might be rich. In Him, says Paul, all God's "riches in glory" are ours.

But there is one other key word, needs. It does not read, wants. To learn the difference is to know another of the secrets of the Christian answer to anxiety.

Philipians 4:21-23. A Personal Farewell.

"Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. . . . All the saints greet you . . . The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

Even after he has said "Amen," Paul cannot quite bring himself to end the letter to his friends whom he may never see again. He greets them once more, every one; repeating as he does so the vital phrase "in Christ Jesus" which has breathed life and power into every part of the epistle. Then, as he ends, his last words pick up the theme with which he started, unity. In the old King James Version the benediction reads, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," but the better manuscripts have Paul's final emphasis in his last words to the Philipians falling on unity. Not "you all" and the diversity of the plural, but "your spirit" and the unity of the singular. "Be with your spirit," his benediction ends, for "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" has indeed made them one.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What bearing has ch. 4:1-7 on the situation at Philippi?
2. In the first three verses what are the three things Paul gives the Philipians to do "in the Lord"?
3. Is the role of women in the church today different from that in Paul's day? How?
4. What are two great qualities of the Christian life as set forth by Paul in vs. 4 and 5?

5. How is the essential character of the whole letter reflected in ch. 4: 4-7?
6. What was Paul's secret of contentment?
7. What makes Paul most happy about the gift from the Church in Philippi?

APPENDIX FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE DEEPER, HARDER BIBLE STUDY

1. What are the most striking characteristics of Paul's letter to the Philippians?
2. Review all the different answers to anxiety which Paul suggests in this letter.
3. Try writing a one page summary of the epistle in letter style.

Then he blamed Karl Barth for his leaving. He fumed "but, though we Presbyterians cheer Barth's Barmen bravery, we forget that, later, he retired from social courage into a kind of defensive biblicism—as has our Presbyterian Church."

It's all right with me if he wants to say all those things about us Presbyterians, but it's not all right with me for him to say that about the old Bear of Basel.

I knew Karl. And this church of ours never was like him! We weren't like Karl Barth when he was young, or middle-aged, or old and tired. He never lost his bravery or his way.

You went too far, David!

But we understand. We've all been mad at some of the same things.

We'll miss you and think of you when we pray the prayer you wrote for us on page 196 of *The Worshipbook*—as long as you watch what you say about Karl Barth.

You have bound us together in the church, great God, and built up the Spirit of love among us Though we must go separate ways in working for your kingdom, help us to know that we are joined forever in your loving care. We thank you for years together, for mutual support and mutual forgiveness. Never let friendship fade, but keep us remembering one another, and grateful for the life we have shared in Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.—Marion W. Conditt, Pastor, First Church, Woodward, Okla.

Philippians Sonnet

Your attitude, my friends, should ever be
The same as Christ who never grasped or held
The essence of divine estate, but he
Took on a human, servant form, withheld
His godly powers and constantly upheld
The dignity of human state, obeyed
The summons of the cross and thus dispelled
The hopelessness that sin and death had made.

Therefore God gave the highest accolade:
A super height, a prime exalted name
Before which every other name must fade,
And every knee must bow and tongue proclaim
That Jesus Christ is Lord, and glory raise
To God the Father, meriting our praise.
—Henry Mahler, Honorably Retired, Lynchburg, Va.

Never Again

I'll never forget that early Monday morning late in September 1950. I had been on board the *Leerdam* for two weeks. I had survived a hurricane at sea and getting seasick while sitting next to the captain at dinner, and now our ship was sailing up the Hudson River. The cars on the highway along the river glistened in the sunshine. They looked like my brother's Tootsie Toys from years ago. I went to find a quiet spot on the bow to watch it all as we passed the Statue of Liberty.

I had come to America to start life anew. Now I could begin to discover the many things I had heard about—free from the controls my well-meaning relatives had exercised over me. I came with hope to what seemed a good country. Some of these hopes have come true. Some have been shattered. I have had a chance through turmoil and struggle with loneliness and the help of true friends to become me—to taste life and to enjoy it.

One big factor through all these years has been being part of a church community. Having been baptized upon my confession of Christ in Holland, I joined a Dutch Reformed congregation, but after some time moved from East to West Main, to Brick Church. There I experienced striving for social justice. First it was in small steps—like making sure that the black Scout troop could stand in front of the church to collect newspapers on Sunday instead of in the back alley. Then it was help resettling East European refugees, the riots of '64, a day-care center with mostly black inner-city children. Later on came the Sanctuary Movement. How could I, who by the grace of God and the loyalty of my Dutch compatriots was saved from death in the gas chambers, stand idly by when others' lives were endangered?

Since we had declared ourselves a More Light congregation, slowly, gays and lesbians came to us. Not many had "come out" and so I met people as people—like Martha. She was hardworking, friendly, open, and I felt I had another friend. Or Charles, who lived near me. We met at the polling place and could have a friendly chat. Did I feel different when I learned they were homosexuals? No. They still are my friends.

Now GA 1993 is over. We are to "study" the problem again, for three years. I can't believe it. We've been studying for many years—and now again? According to the reports, gays and lesbians can be part of our community, but not as elders, clergy, or deacons—second-class Presbyterians, good only for nonleadership, slave labor, and financial support. Is this any different from what that Prussian ruler demanded of his people when he ordered them to "become soldiers—pay taxes and shut up"?

I believe it is time that we go through a 1990s Re-Formation, making room for all who profess Christ as Lord and Savior to serve our Lord the best way they know how.

PHILIPPIANS

A Study in Mission

The book we will be reading together for our Bible Hour studies is the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians. I hadn't read more than the first two paragraphs before I knew I had picked the right book for the right people. It is a good habit to look for words or phrases that are often repeated as preliminary clues to points of emphasis that might otherwise be overlooked, and one phrase stands out very vividly here at the beginning. Corybeare and Howson make it solemnly official, in a footnote, "The constant repetition of 'all' in connection with 'you' in this epistle is remarkable." (p. 787). "You all." Five times in chapter 1! Which suggests, I suppose, that if Paul was a Presbyterian, as some of our more exuberant brethren would like to claim, he was surely a Southern Presbyterian.

~~But now laying aside denominational pride,~~ let us read the epistle ^{as a missionary letter} together ~~not as Presbyterians, so much,~~ but as missionaries. Philipians comes alive to me with particular force when I read it as a lesson in missions. It was written to his first church in Europe by the first missionary to Europe, and it behooves us to ponder carefully what we learn from ^{St. Paul} ~~him~~ in that time of strategic beginnings.

^{They were times in China when I wished that the communists would reach Philipians. They}
~~In our day the communists never tire of ranting about Western imperialism invading the Orient through the Christian missionary movement.~~ Philipians is a timely reminder that they are all wrong. The first missionary went the other way. The gospel didn't "invade" Asia; it came from Asia, and its first beach-head in the European West, so far as we have any record, was at Philippi. If there is any complaining to be done about the imperialism of the gospel, we Westerners ^{are the ones who should be shouting the loudest; we} are the ones who were conquered--and by Asia!

In the communist myth, the missionary is the aggressor. In Philippi he is in prison; and is in prison again when he writes to the Philippians. In the communist myth, the missionary buys his converts with capitalist gold. In Philippi, it is ^{just} the other way around. It is the ^{converts} ~~converts~~ who are paying the missionary. (The whole letter to the Philippians is really just a thank-you note for their gifts.) In the communist myth, the missionary is an imperialist; in Philippi, the missionary is of a conquered race, and it is his converts who are the imperialists, grandsons of the very Roman soldiers who, ^{at the battle of Philippi,} ~~at the battle of Philippi, avenged the death of Julius Caesar,~~ ^{death} ~~the death-blow to the Republic,~~ and established the Empire. Do you remember your Shakespeare?

"There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries..."

These words of Brutus were spoken on the road to Philippi, and to death. With him died the Republic and the grateful Emperor, in memory of his victory, re-founded the city of Philippi and settled it with his veterans, imperialists every one. Curiously enough, even the little church there is born with an imperialist tinge in the house of Lydia, a seller of the imperial purple. As for the missionary, he was just a ^{liberal} ~~liberal~~, a maker of tents

for the missionary, he was just a laborer, a maker of tents. *The conversion of the empire*

But Philippi can be hard on Christian myths as well. How many times I have heard good people say, "Don't worry about the Church in China, or in North Korea. 'The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.'" If we take that promise to mean that no church can be wiped out by the enemy we are guilty of wishful thinking. Paul writes in verse 2, "to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi". Where are the saints of Philippi now? Where is that church today, the first church in Europe, the apple of Paul's eye. To no other church of all that he founded does the apostle write so affectionately and intimately: (verses 7,8):

"It is right for me to feel thus about you all, because I hold you in my heart,... For God is my witness how I yearn for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more..."

Philippians has none of the stinging rebuke of Corinthians, none of the biting gall of Galatians. Paul trusted the Church of Philippi as a partner, and loved it as a child.

But where is that church today? Ten feet underground. I have seen pictures of the plain of Philippi. A tumbling wall, a heap of stones where archaeologists have scratched away the dust of centuries; a column standing bare and broken against a line of snowy hills. That is all. There is no church left.

"But the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it", the earnest Christian cries. "God promised!" No. The promise is to the Church, not the churches; not even to the church in Philippi. The Biblical promise, like Noah's rainbow, is no guarantee of local immunity. There have been floods since Noah's day, though no world deluge, and many churches have been wiped out since our Lord made his promise to his Church. It can happen again.

And only 20 years after the invasion.

But now look back 1940 years. It is 50 A.D., some ninety years after the battle of Philippi. The missionary from Asia, the pioneer to Europe steps ashore at Neapolis, and the gospel enters Europe a new continent. ~~But~~ Shakespeare should have put his words into the mouth of Paul, not Brutus, on the road to Philippi. "There is a tide in the affairs of men..." There is indeed, but not with Brutus. The tide of history was with that missionary, landing unheralded, no trumpets blowing, at Neapolis. *at the Macedonian town. Where* The town is called Kavalla now, and travellers say (H.V. Morton, In the Footsteps of St Paul, p.) that a priest will still show you a round mark in the alley back behind the Greek Church where the old coast line used to be. "You are looking at the place where the Apostle Paul landed from the shores of Asia Minor," he says.

But Paul did not linger in Neapolis. I can imagine ^{I was} Luke, who, Ramsay says, was born in Philippi, hurrying Paul over the coastal ridge to the city, nine miles away, excitedly pointing out the landmarks: the Greek town along the hills, the Roman colony spreading proudly through the plain. Writing about it later, Luke can scarcely restrain his pride, "From there (i.e. Neapolis, we came) to Philippi, the leading city of the district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony." [Citizens of Amphipolis, the capital, might have objected, but Luke was right. Philippi already shared some of the glamour of imperial Rome; as a colony, it was Rome in miniature.] Perhaps

Luke pointed to a grove of trees where the Ganges~~n~~ ran outside the city and where a small colony of Jews met on the Sabbath for prayer. There, a few days later, Lydia "opened her heart" to the Lord. "It was in green pastures and beside still waters that St. Paul won his first European convert," observes Hastings.

Twelve or thirteen years later Paul writes back to those converts in Philippi. "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi....."

For anyone who likes neat outlines, constructed around a central, unifying theme, Philippians is going to be a disappointment. There isn't any central theme. Philippians is not an essay, like Romans or Hebrews. It is pure letter, warm, personal, repetitious, and like some sermons I have heard, twice as long as it starts out to be. Paul finishes it up in chapter 2 (as we divide it), says "Finally", and then goes on for two more chapters. He writes seven verses in chapter 4, says "Finally" again, and goes on for twice as many more verses. Even after he has said "Amen", he can't stop, but adds a three-verse postscript.

Thank God he did not stop! Imagine a New Testament without verses like:

"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (3:8)

Or, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings..." (3:10)

Or, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (3:13,14)

And, "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." (4:7)

And, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (4:8)

It is not hard to see why the Holy Spirit did not let Paul stop with chapter two. Philippians is informal and unsystematic, but full of jewels.

Analytically, the book divides into six main sections:

1. Introduction, and prayer for the Philippians (1:1-11) First 2 paragraphs.
2. Then the subject shifts to Paul's situation in Rome (1:12-26) 3 paragraphs.
3. His thought turns back to Philippi: Appeal for unity (1:27-2:16) 4 paragraphs.
4. Again in Rome, Paul's future plans (2:19-30) 2 paragraphs.
5. To Philippi once more, Warnings and appeals (3:1-4:8) 8 paragraphs.
6. Thanks for the gift from Philippi (4:9-23) 3 paragraphs.

But to me the letter is kaleidoscopic, not analytic; full of unexpected depth and beauty, but not to be cramped into any one mould. At times its diverse and multi-colored parts fall into place about one subject, then suddenly

^{they} ~~it~~ shifts to frame another subject. At first the highlight falls on the church in Philippi, partners in the gospel; then the glass turns and a more central figure comes into focus, Paul the prisoner. But Paul says, "No, to me to live is Christ", and shifts ~~to~~ the focus to a more enduring subject, his Servant Lord. Again the parts shift, and we see Paul again, but transformed in Christ, ~~the~~ Omnipotent Slave. This is how the epistle comes alive to me, revolving kaleidoscopically around four major figures: the Philippian Partners, the Happy Prisoner, the Servant Lord, and the Omnipotent Slave.

^(for the epistle as a missionary study)
 But if you must have a central theme, let me borrow that rather awkward, double-barrelled slogan of the Willingen Conference of the I.M.C., and adapt it to Philippians. Let the theme be, "Paul Calls the Church to Mission and to Unity". And the outline, as the epistle rearranges itself around its four central figures, will be:

- I. The Missionary as Partner. For the mission ~~is~~ a partnership, and the gospel must advance with a united front. (1:1-11 ^{The true-felt partnership.} 1:27-30 ^{← 4:1-3 Partnership by unity} 4:14-23) ^{Partnership in mission}
- II. The Missionary as Prisoner. The mission is dangerous; the church divides; but rejoice and keep preaching. (1:12-26 2:19-30 4:9-17)
- III. The Servant Lord. The secret of unity in mission is Christ. (1:27-2:18 3:1-21)
- IV. The Omnipotent Slave. The secret of success in mission is Christ. (1:1; 2:9-11 4:8-13)

I. The Missionary as Partner
 (1:1-11; 27-30; 4:14-23)

Paul calls the church to mission and to unity, and the first lesson he teaches in Philippians on that theme is summed up in the word partnership. The word makes me a little uneasy at first. ("Partners" sounds dangerously like "fraternal workers".) As a matter of fact I can remember being quite uneasy about ^{the word} that Willingen slogan back in 1953, with its "Call to Mission and to Unity." I couldn't quite put my ~~finger~~ finger on what seemed wrong, but it irritated me, somehow. Then I suddenly realized what it was that bothered me. It was the historically awkward coupling of "mission" and "unity". It sounded like an historical contradiction. A call to "mission", yes. But mission and unity? By and large, in the history of the church, mission has come out of disunity; and, to a lesser degree, perhaps, union has put an end to mission, hasn't it? ^{In many American Presbyterians we tend to forget that.}

When the Protestant world mission was born, for example, in the eighteenth century, it came not from the great united churches that had developed out of the center of the Reformation. It came from the disunited sects: the Pietists, the Moravians, the Particular Baptists. The Reformers ~~themselves~~, I regret to sa

say, took their theology from Paul, but unhappily sidestepped his mission.

So when, in 1706, Frederick IV of Denmark, a ^{most} devout Lutheran, looked about for his first missionaries, he went not to the organized Church, but to the Pietists, and organized Lutheranism thundered against the folly of this mission which sought to convert savages who, as one prominent Lutheran pulpiteer ^{observed}, "have nothing human about them but the shape of their bodies." In that first Danish mission to Tranquebar which marks the beginning of a Protestant world mission, there was only one regular Lutheran churchman. The rest were fringe Lutherans, Pietist enthusiasts. And it was the one churchman, I am ashamed to note, who soon gave up the mission and returned to Europe while the Pietists held the field.

Or take William Carey, the father of English world missions. It was not until after he had left the comforting communion ~~with~~ of the Anglican church,-- that authorized and apostolic medium of reunion--not until he had joined the small separatist sect of the Particular Baptists (they weren't even General Baptists) that his eyes were opened and he began to preach a world mission for the church. (The first reaction of his solidly Anglican father was, "Is William mad?" (Oussoren, p. 38).) Not even all the Particular Baptists were in the mission, they were so divided among themselves about it. That first world missionary society had to call itself, "A Society founded among the Particular Baptists", not, "A Society of the Particular Baptists" (Toid, p. 144)

And what happened when our own Presbyterian Church, back when we were one, tried to organize a Board of Foreign Missions. It split the Church wide open; cut it in half--the New School, Old School schism.

Missions and unity? It is an historical contradiction. It is not in unity that mission has been born. It is conceived astonishingly enough, in disunion. Didn't Paul know that? Was it not at the precise moment when the apostolic church discovered its world mission that it almost lost its treasured unity. What happened when St. Paul's mission to the Gentiles broke Christianity out of its Jewish boundaries into a world mission? He split the church. ~~And he~~ He admits it here in this chapter. And he almost split the Apostles. Unity does not seem to be the happy bed-fellow of mission that the Willingen slogan might imply.

One of the thorniest problems now facing the World Council of Churches is that, for this very reason (the apparent contradiction between unity and mission) considerable bodies of churches refuse to join the ecumenical movement. "How can we justify our missions to Greek Orthodox areas," they ask, "if we are united, Protestant and Orthodox bodies together, in the World Council."

Finally, it is almost a death blow to our theme to observe that the churches with the least desire for union seem to have the most urgent sense of mission and have become the fastest growing churches in the world. It is the splintering sects that are growing, both here and abroad. In the last 25 years the 60% of the foreign missions enterprise which has connections with the ecumenical movement has actually suffered a sharp decline in personnel, while it is the unconnected 40% which has shown such phenomenal increase.

Do you remember the embarrassment of the Honolulu churches when the first, much-heralded shipload of missionaries, 300 of them, sailed for the Orient after the war. Arrangements were carefully prepared by the Honolulu Council of

Churches: Episcopalians would take care of ~~Episcopalian~~ missionaries on their one-day stopover in the islands; Presbyterians would take care of Presbyterians, and so forth. So the ship docked, and ~~there~~ the good people gathered under signs, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Methodists, etc., so that the missionaries would recognize their hosts. Well, a trickle of denominational missionaries trooped decorously to their signs, all right, but behind them, milling about uncertainly in great numbers, were the hosts of the unwashed: the Pentecostals, Adventists, Nazarenes, sects and faith missions, unknown and ignored, but advancing to their mission in far greater numbers, at least, if not with greater unity and judgment, than we. T

Knowing all this, I was a little skeptical ^{about my} ~~of the~~ "call to mission and to unity." Paul would not share my reaction. He ~~has~~ had greater faith. Steadfast unity, he teaches in Philippians, is ~~what~~ precisely what is needed to scatter the opponents of the gospel and bring its triumph. The key verse is 1:27, "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ..that..I may hear of you that stand firm in ne spirit with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear omen to them of their destruction, but of your salvation..." Striving side by side for the gospel: mission and unity. As a matter of fact, Philippians really lays more stress on unity than mission; whereas my own prejudices are all the other way around.

* 1:27
Key:

~~As we said~~, Paul's first lesson in unity and mission is a lesson on partnership. He treats it from three angles: (1) partnership among the missionaries (2) partnership between missionaries and the church, and (3) partnership in the church.

(1) The theme of partnership is implicit in the very first verse, and how graciously Paul introduces it, "Paul and Timothy...to all the saints...at Philippi..." Everyone knew it was Paul's letter, not Timothy's, but with ~~the~~ two words, "Paul and Timothy", the old pioneer lifts up his junior missionary into full partnership and commends him to the church. The missionaries belong together in unity in mission.

* 1:1

(2) And secondly, the missionary and the young church belong together in unity and mission. This becomes most explicit in verse 5: "thankful for your partnership in the gospel," says Paul in his moving prayer for his beloved Philippians. The King James version has, "fellowship in the gospel", but the RSV is better, for the real meaning is "their common participation with Paul in spreading the gospel" (Expositors Greek Testament). They are partners in ~~the gospel~~.

* 1:5

How old the "new day in missions" really is. Back in 1947 the Whitby Conference of the EMC, with its slogan, "Partners in Obedience" called us excitedly to a new emphasis in missions, "a new equality, a new oneness between older and younger churches" (Hogg, Ecumenical Foundations, p. 339). A Chinese delegate remarked, "at Jerusalem and Madras the relationship between older and younger churches was like that between a father and his children. Here it is like that between an older brother and a younger brother" (Ibid, p. 340f.). The days of paternalism were over. The day of partnership had arrived!

I am glad that it is to Paul and not to Whitby that we owe the "new day". And I am glad that Korea did not wait until Whitby to practice partnership in mission. Forty years before Whitby, on the same day back in 1907 that our predecessors watched with quiet pride the birth of a new, independent self-governing Presbyterian Church in Korea--on that same day they watched with even greater pride as the new young church, barely born yet, rose to its full Christian responsibility with a maturity far beyond its years and unselfishly chose one of its precious handful of newly-ordained ministers, (there were only seven of them for the whole country) and delegated him to go out as its missionary to carry the gospel beyond ~~the~~ the seas.

My father used to say it was one of the high moments of his life when he commissioned that new missionary. Sixteen years before, entering North Korea as its first resident Protestant missionary, he had faced a mob in the streets of Pyongyang. Out of the back alleys they poured to stone the "foreign devil". Father used to say he was always glad he was a ~~thin~~ thin man, for not so many stones can hit a thin man. One of those who stoned him in the streets that day was a young man named Yi Kui Poong. Sixteen years later he found himself facing Yi Kui Poong again: the first moderator of the new church facing its first foreign missionary. It was Yi Kui Poong, converted, trained and ordained, whom that first Presbytery picked for foreign mission, for so service on Qulepart Island was considered in those days.

Thank God for the Korean Church's partnership in our great mission of reaching the whole inhabited earth for Christ--their "partnership in the gospel from (that) first day until now." First to Qulepart (1907); then to Japan (1907) and Siberia (1908). The first General Assembly in 1912 made a further leap of faith, sending missionaries to China, not for work among Koreans there, but among the Chinese in Shantung. In our own day the mission continues to enlarge: to Thailand (1956), and this year, if God wills, to Indonesia and Iran. Partners in mission. *Today the Korean churches have 2,596 fresh missionaries at work around the world - 138 in the Philippines alone ^ 1982-321*

But what about Philippi? What was its partnership in mission. As at the beginning, so at the end of the letter, Paul refers to it again (4:15): You shared my trouble, he says, "No church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving except you only." Philippians is Paul's thank-you letter to one of his supporting churches.

Is that all there was to the partnership? Financial interest and support? We may have one small bit of historical evidence that Philippi's "partnership in mission" was an even more active partnership. Origen, writing only about 150 years after Paul's death says (Jn. 1:29) that the Clement mentioned in Philippians 4:3 is Clement of Rome. Some writers scoff at this identification (e.g. Kennedy, in Exp. Gk. Test.), others are skeptical. After all, Clement was a common name, and there is admittedly no evidence apart from Origen's remark, and a comment, perhaps, in Irenaeus. But ~~it~~ it is at least an old tradition and a possibility to be reckoned with. I like to think it is so. I like to think that the little church in Philippi, first fruit of Paul's mission in Europe, took its partnership with him in that mission so seriously that, when at last the great apostle laid down his life a martyr for the gospel in Rome, his beloved Philippians sent from their small number a missionary to take his place: Clement, "whose name is in the book of life", writer of the earliest Christian document known outside the New Testament, Clement's Letter to the Corinthians.

* 715

43

Whitby a young man

"follow-up" not just "problems"

From Joy in an Anxious Age (by Sam & Susan Moffett)
two more chapters. He writes seven verses in ch. 4, says "Finally" again, and goes on for twice as many more verses. Even after he has said "Amen" (ch. 4: 20), he cannot stop but adds a three-verse postscript.

Analytically, the letter divides into six main sections:

1. Greetings and prayer for the Philippians (ch. 1: 1-11).
2. Then the subject shifts to Paul's situation in Rome (ch. 1: 12-26).
3. His thought turns back to Philippi with an appeal for unity (chs. 1: 2 to 2: 18).
4. Again in Rome, he tells of his future plans (ch. 2: 19-30).
5. To Philippi once more, warnings and appeals (chs. 3: 1 to 4: 8).
6. Thanks for the gift from Philippi (ch. 4: 9-23).

But we will divide the letter a little differently and outline it as follows:

PHILIPPIANS: AN OUTLINE

- I. The Joys of Partnership (ch. 1: 1-11)
 - A. Paul and His Partner: A Greeting (vs. 1-2)
 1. The partnership is for mission (v. 1)
 2. The partnership is in Christ (vs. 1-2)
 - B. Paul and His Partners: A Prayer (vs. 3-11)
 1. They were his joy in the past (vs. 3-5)
 2. They are his beloved friends now (vs. 7-8)
 3. He is confident of their future (vs. 6, 9-11)
- II. The Joys of Adversity (ch. 1: 12-30)
 - A. The Advantages of Opposition (vs. 12-18)
 1. Imprisonment can help the gospel (vs. 12-14)
 2. Even church division has its uses (vs. 15-18)
 - B. The Hope of Deliverance (vs. 19-26)
 1. Our hope is in Christ (vs. 19-21)
 2. Our deliverance is for others (vs. 22-26)
 - C. The Christians' Part in Victory (ch. 1: 27-30)
 1. Be moral (v. 27)
 2. Be united (v. 27)
 3. Be brave (v. 28)
 4. Accept suffering (v. 29)
 5. Be involved (v. 30)
- III. The Joys of Unity (ch. 2: 1-11)
 - A. The Call to Unity: Be One (vs. 1-2)
 - B. The Prerequisite of Unity: Be Humble (vs. 3-4)
 - C. The Secret of Unity: Be in Christ (vs. 5-11)
 1. The power is in Christ (v. 5)
 2. The example is Christ (vs. 6-11)

On Partnership

On Joy in Times of Trouble

On the Unity of the Church

- IV. The Pursuit of Unity (ch. 2: 12-30)
 - A. The Responsibility of Unity (vs. 12-13)
 - B. The Marks of Responsibility (vs. 14-18)
 - C. Leadership for Unity (vs. 19-30)
 1. Timothy, the missionary partner (vs. 19-24)
 2. Epaphroditus, the local leader (vs. 25-30)
- V. Warnings Against Three Threats to Unity (ch. 3: 1-21)
 - A. Against Self-righteous Legalists (vs. 1-11)
 1. Rites are nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 1-3)
 2. Race is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 4-7)
 3. Our righteousness is nothing; Christ is everything (vs. 8-11)
 - B. Against Self-satisfied Saints (vs. 12-16)
 - C. Against Self-serving Sinners (vs. 17-21)
- VI. Final Appeals for Joy and Unity in Christ (ch. 4: 1-23)
 - A. Appeal for Unity (vs. 1-3)
 - B. Appeal for Joy (vs. 4-7)
 - C. Concluding Remarks (vs. 8-23)
 1. The Christian's mind (vs. 8-9)
 2. The Christian's resources (vs. 10-23)

On the Way to Achieve Unity in the Church

On Three Threats to Xn Unity

STUDY HELPS

1. Read together Acts, ch. 16.
What three segments of society were represented by the first converts in Philippi? What segments of society is your church reaching? Does it miss any? Why?
2. How did Paul and Timothy make use of Roman influences in Philippi for the advantage of the gospel? Applying this lesson to ourselves, list ways in which we might take advantage of social change in our own society for the sake of our revolutionary faith.
3. Review the reasons for Paul's great interest in Philippi. What can we learn from him in terms of strategic planning? Where are the most important centers for Christian mission in today's world?
4. List the reasons why our age is called "An Anxious Age." As you begin to read Philippians, jot down any Christian answers to these specific anxieties that you may find.
5. Locate and begin to familiarize yourselves with some of the following commentaries and study books (perhaps available in the church library):

William Barclay, ed., *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (The Daily Study Bible).

PHILIPPIANS: REJOICE!

In our last session I said Philipppians had no central, unifying theme. True. But it does have one all-pervading mood: This epistle is saturated with JOY.

KEY VERSE: 4:4. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say Rejoice."

And it does have one underlying theme. There was a deeper reason that impelled Paul to write to the Philipppians - not just to thank them for their gift, but to plead with them not to split the church. This epistle is an exhortation to UNITY.

KEY VERSE: 1:27b. "... stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving for side by side for the faith of the gospel."

Joy and unity - those are the two poles, the two central themes, around which Paul's whole letter revolves. But I have left out the key word, one single word which is more ~~than~~ important than either one of the two alone. The key word in the epistle is CHRIST. What Paul is talking about is not simply joy and unity - but our joy and unity in Christ.

This is the way then to outline the epistle: -

- I. The Joys of Partnership (1:1-11). The partnership is for mission; the partnership is in Christ.
- II. The Joys of Adversity (1:12-30). Even church division has its uses; our joy, hope are in Christ.
- III. The Joys of Unity (2:1-11). (Here unity enters the picture, already introduced in 1:27).
- IV. How to Achieve Unity in the Church. (2:12-30)
- V. Three Threats to Unity. (3:1-21)
- VI. Final Appeals for Joy and Unity (4:1-25).

Now let's look at the letter itself. ^{Today begins with} Count how many times "joy" or "rejoice" occurs. More than 13. Today we'll begin with the second paragraph of chap. 1, - verse 12. Paul was a prisoner in Rome - but he writes back to the Philipppians and doesn't say - "Feel sorry for me. Pray that I'll be released." He says rather, "I rejoice" (vs. 18), Yes & I shall rejoice (vs. 19). And in chapter 4 - "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice."

But what was there for him to rejoice about? Read what he says about his situation, and you wonder if he can be really serious - He's a prisoner; the church has split in two -

II. The Missionary as Prisoner : REJOICE

(1:12-26; 2:19-30; 4:4-7) - Samuel H. Moffett

Yesterday's theme was The Missionary as Prisoner. That's the bright side of the mission. But sometimes the mission is not so bright. What happens when the missionary is not so bright? What happens when the missionary is not so bright? What happens when the missionary is not so bright?

I said yesterday that Philippians has no central, unifying theme (except, perhaps, that all-inclusive, double one we manufactured for it, "Paul's Call to Mission and to Unity"). And that is true, it has no single theme, but it does have one all-pervading mood: this epistle, incongruously enough, is saturated with joy. The old commentator, Bengel, says, "The sum of the epistle is 'I rejoice, rejoice ye'". And the reason we can rejoice even in anxious times, is that we are united in Jesus Christ.

But it is incongruous, for the epistle is written by a prisoner, and at first glance there would seem to be little in his situation to be happy about. But Paul rejoices. Just count the number of times the word "joy" or rejoice" occurs. More than thirteen times in this one ~~epistle~~ short letter. Some even take 4:4 as the key-verse for the whole epistle: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice." Paul was a prisoner, but a happy one. This is the second figure around which the parts of the epistle fall into focus: Paul, the Happy Prisoner. (esp. 1:12-26; 2:19-30; 4:4-7).

But what was there for him to rejoice about? He rejoices, first, that the Philippians are partners with him in mission: "making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel" (1:4,5). But what a feeble partnership! At least on the surface. A missionary who cannot move beyond the confining circle of his chain; and a new little church, dominated, apparently, if we read the reference in 4:2 aright, by a clique of quarreling women.

He rejoices next about the situation he faces in Rome (1:12-18). But when you read what he says about that situation you begin to wonder if he can really be serious. The church has split in two, and envious, rival preachers are preaching the gospel for the sole purpose, it seems, of causing him trouble. "So I rejoice," he says. Incredible! Why rejoice? Can he?

Finally, in verses 19-26, this strangely happy prisoner rejoices at the prospect of deliverance from prison. That at least makes sense. But poor Paul. Didn't he know that the odds had already turned ominously against him. He was writing perhaps in 63 A.D., in Rome, we believe, (though other less attractive theories have been advanced, e.g. Caesarea, Ephesus). In Rome in 63 A.D., prospects for a prisoner of the Praetorian Guard were rather dim. The good Burrhus, the last good Praetorian prefect under Nero, was dead. It is to Burrhus that Paul may have owed his fairly lenient treatment as a captive. But Burrhus was dead, succeeded by the tiger, Tigellinus, debaucher of the Emperor's own sisters, and the very worst of Nero's creatures. In 63 A.D., wise old Seneca had just fallen from power. He was the nearest thing to a Prime Minister that the Empire had ever had. He might have been a great help to Paul. His writings would so much like Paul himself at times that historians have persistently but inconclusively tried to trace a connection between the two men (e.g. Seneca influenced by Athenodorus of Tarsus). But Seneca had fallen; he no longer was Nero's tutor, and his vicious young student, corrupted by power, set out to murder all who stood in his way--his tutor, his wife, even his old mother. What was Paul to him? His best chances for freedom were already gone.

That means joy even in anxious times - even when we are divided among ourselves (as in the last lesson), even when we are persecuted. Philippians does not advocate joy in division; but it is not crushed by church schism. It asserts joy in spite of trouble. 1:12-26 - 1:12-18 2:19-30 - 2:19-30 4:4-7 - 4:4-7 Rejoice

This was the turn point in Nero's reign. Burrhus was dead.

1. In prison
2. Church divided

Well - no thing

Paul's

Next year, in 64 A.D., the storm would break in earnest; Rome would burn; the Christians would be blamed and would find themselves stripped of their last legal refuge, the exemption from emperor-worship which up to now they had enjoyed as a sect of the Jews. Next year Christians would be covered with tar and set alight on poles as torches for Nero's Roman banquets. And Paul blindly rejoices at his prospects of deliverance. Didn't he know it was hopeless.

Kierkegaard remarks somewhere, "For practical purposes, it is at the hopeless moment that we require the hopeful man... Exactly where hope ceases to be reasonable, it begins to be useful." (Works of Love). That almost describes Paul here, but not quite. Kierkegaard is a little too much of an irrationalist for me. There is nothing really unreasonable about Paul's joy and Paul's hope. His hope was Jesus Christ. "I hope in the Lord Jesus..." (2:19)

Take his first joy, joy in partnership. Taken in itself, of course, the "partnership in the gospel" of which Paul speaks was a weak and pitiful thing: a prisoner and a handful of uncertainly united Christians. But Paul did not take it in itself. He took it "in Christ". Never think of Christian partnership in mission as a horizontal line. That is the trouble with too much of the talk about ecumenical relations today, [and that is what I do not like about the name "fraternal worker"--it is horizontal, organizational and flat. Partnership to Paul always begins above, with Christ.

However weak the human partners may be--a prisoner in chains, a divided church--in Christ there is always available the limitless resources of the Lord God Almighty. Paul ends his letter with this assurance to his Philippian partners, "My God will supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (4:19) And that is all the necessary needs. That is all his partners in the young church need. With it to count we can rejoice, no matter how weak and strained the partnership may seem at times.

* Admitted, then, that there was nothing unreasonable in Paul's first joy, the joy of partnership, what about the second joy, joy in division? It is not only absurd, surely it is unChristian, too. Paul sounds almost ecumenical in the first paragraph, but here he is virtually condoning separatism, and rejoicing in the midst of splintering sects. How are we going to explain this tragic relapse of Paul's to the "one-church" propagandists of our day who would like to own the ecumenical movement.

Actually, of course, they are the ones who need to do the explaining. Measured against Pauline serenity in the face of so extreme a case of church division as is described in 1: 15-18, the shocked surprise and shrill cries of some church spokesmen at the relatively mild denominational distinctions of our own day (seem a little forced and theatrical.) This is the one point at which I cannot follow Lesslie Newbigin, whose writings in other respects have been a great blessing to me. When he shudders at our "plurality of 'Churches'", and calls it as scandalous as finding a habitual drunk in the membership of the WCTU (The Reunion of the Church, p. 23f.), I think he doth protest too much. He needs a little Pauline joy to carry him through the depression of division. He goes too far. Paul simply rejoices that so many are preaching the gospel.

(Historians are less emotional about division than bishops. Professor Latourette goes so far as to ~~not~~ consider church divisions a sign of life and vigor in the church rather than of decay. As for Toyhbee, you are familiar with his observation that consolidation and unification are the marks of a declining, not a rising civilization.)

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That is absurd

of division.

But do not carry that line of argument too far. To be Biblical it must be pointed out that it was not the division over which Paul was rejoicing. Philippians gives no real comfort to separatists; from beginning to end it is a plea for unity. The reason Paul can rejoice even in the midst of division is that he has supreme confidence in the gospel of Christ, which, preached even in envy and rivalry and division, yet speaks with such compelling power that it can and save. "What then," he says in 1:18; "in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in that I rejoice." Note particularly (vs. 14) who does the preaching - "most of the brethren" - *we* - "the prophesying of all believers" (cf. Num. 11:29) "wield that all the Lord's people were people".

Let this be a lesson to us when we are sore burdened about our own unhappy divisions in Korea. How far from reality sometimes seem the glowing reports which visitors write about us. Flooded with the unforgettable impressions that a short visit to Korea can make: crowded prayer meetings, sacrificial giving, revival preaching and irresistible evangelistic advance—the visitors often carry back home the conviction that the Korean Church is more of a "first-century New Testament church" than any they have ever seen.

Well, they are right, but only the in full Biblical, not the popular sense of the term. Take a look at the other side of that "first-century, New Testament church". Read Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians. Don't forget Ananias and Sapphira. Remember that Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve, and that Laodicea was a first-century, New Testament church. God spews it out of his mouth (Rev. 3:16). Don't long for a golden age that never was, and don't lose your missionary faith and joy even if Korea is, at times, as legalistic as Galatia, as self-righteous as Laodicea, (and, alas, sometimes as untrustworthy as Ananias,) and as full of division as Rome. What then? Christ is proclaimed. Rejoice!

It is strange that Rome today stands for massive, monolithic unity, whereas to Paul, in the first century, it was a tragic object lesson in church division. Let me read again his description to you: "Some preach Christ from envy and rivalry...out of partisanship, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment." When Calvin read these verses they reminded him of Avignon. When I read them, I say to myself, "He's describing Taegu". Poor Korea. Where else in the world do you have a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ Presbyterian Church fighting against each other. Christ divided! And then, on top of division, to have some segments of our own church turn viciously on the missionary. It seems like the last straw. [It has happened in just about every denomination in Korea.]

If it happens to you (and it may) the answer is not to pack up and go home. Sit down first and read Philippians. It all happened to Paul long before it ever happened to you. "Some preach Christ from envy and rivalry...thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment." Practice the apostolic, the missionary reaction: "What then? Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice!"

This passage so lifted Calvin out of his depression over the carryings-on at Avignon that he was able to say, "~~Like Paul~~ we, on hearing that that impure dog (Peter) Carolus was scattering the seeds of pure doctrine at Avignon and elsewhere, we (Like Paul) gave thanks to God because he had made use of that most profligate and worthless villain for his glory" (Calvin, Comm.). A little too much gritting of the teeth, perhaps, but he did rejoice. He didn't give up.

Here in Korea, too, however profligate the "dogs" may be, at least the doctrine is usually pure. [Why, even most of the liberals are conservative.] So let us rejoice with Paul and give thanks to God even in the midst of division. Christ is being preached.

The second chapter
 In (another) section (2:19-30), Paul tells us another part of his secret of being able to rejoice in the face of disaster. If everything looks completely and absolutely black in your own immediate situation, lift up your eyes and look around a little farther for something encouraging to cheer you up. Discouraged, but not defeated, by the situation in Rome, Paul looks for more cheerful news from Philippi. "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you," he writes in 2:19. Your station is not the whole field. Taegu is pretty bad right now, but things are looking up in Andong. [Taegu has turned against the missionary, trying to impeach him. But look at Uisong. There they have elected a missionary vice-moderator.] On the mission field there is always something to rejoice about. The Lord Jesus sees to that. If the visitor sometimes comes away with too golden an impression of the field, sometimes we tired missionaries get to seeing it too black. Remember both sides of the first-century, New Testament church, and thank God that Korea is Biblical like Berea (Acts 17:11); and mission-minded, like Philippi, and orthodox like Ephesus (Rev 2:2) and in so large a measure consecrated like the churches of Macedonia who "first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor 8:5). Rejoice, and again I say rejoice! (4:4)

*Father
 Perhaps the
 is working
 how to
 do it*

Paul's third joy was his hope of deliverance. 1:19: "Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Christ this will turn out for my deliverance," he writes, and goes on to speak of his hope of visiting Philippi again (1:26).

joy in prison: and here again, in XT. There is nothing unreasonable in joy in prison. 1) Opportunity. 2) Hope

*But better yet
 look to Jesus
 P. 17*

The situation was hopeless. Burrhus was dead; Seneca disgraced; Nero on the throne. But Paul had hope. Where is the quickening of that kind of hope in the church today. Why is there so much defeatism sweeping through the free world? Look at Arnold Toynbee, a Christian, arguing in his book, The Fearful Choice, that since a nuclear war would bring the total destruction of England and perhaps the world, such a war must be prevented at all costs even if it means (giving up) our nuclear armaments and accepting at once from Russia the best possible terms of peace.

Surrender

How different from Paul. Toynbee's prison of fear is far darker and more dangerous than all Paul's iron chains, because Paul had Christian hope, and Christian hope gave him Christian joy and no thought of surrender. When danger threatens and the world caves in, no syncretistic, synthetic, "Synmachan" hope, such as Toynbee tries to fashion from all the world's great religions, will do. His own defeatism betrays the weakness of that kind of faith. Only a singular hope like Paul's will do. It is the kind of hope we need for the mission field.

Missionary work in "the new day" sometimes reminds me of the great flood of 1923 on the Taitong River. Every summer father would take the whole family along with him as he visited churches along the river. We would take a long river boat, build a little thatch-roof house on it, and spend the summer going up and down the river. For us boys, it was the best part of the year.

But the summer of 1923 was unusual. We were anchored about two miles above the city of Pyongyang one evening when the boatmen told us that the rains had begun in the mountains. That meant the beginning of the annual summer flood, so we moved the house-boat into a sheltered place and tied it to a large willow tree and prepared to wait out the flood. That night the river rose 18 feet. That was nothing unusual, but ~~the~~ it kept rising all day and the next night, too. On the morning of the second day it had reached the 40-foot level, and at noon the waters suddenly broke through at the base of the peninsula to which we were tied, and we found ourselves on an island, cut off from the shore by a great boiling, muddy, stream. And still the waters kept rising. By evening, even the island was covered and only the trees stood out from the flood. That night we heard cries for help as the great flood swept whole villages away down the river.

On the morning of the third day, feeling like Noah and his family in the ark, we watched the last leaves of the big willow tree to which we were tied disappear one by one beneath the muddy waters of the flood, and on either side of us the swirling ~~muddy waters~~ Taitong stretched a mile, unbroken, to either bank. We were alone in the middle of the flood. There was only one thing left, one thing left to trust in--that rope which we all watched so carefully, the rope which vanished into the waters and somewhere down there anchored us to the willow tree.

How like the ^{mission field} world today, ~~looking for~~ protection behind peninsulas, in sheltered inlets, but the peninsulas are swept away and the inlets become flooded torrents. Then, if he is weak, man is tempted to jump into the flood and end it all. Like the defeatists.

But the Christian is not that easily discouraged. He knows that there is always one thing left. There is still the rope stretching into the waters, anchoring us safely amid the flood. We were not swept away that day on the Taitong long ago; our rope held, even though we could not see the tree to which it was tied, and we rode out the flood in safety.

That anchoring rope is a symbol of our Christian hope. The Bible, (perhaps Paul, if he wrote Hebrews) speaks of hope as "an anchor of the soul" (Heb. 6:19). Our hope is a person. Our hope is in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ is our hope.

~~Of course the mission will have its discouragements, its frustrations its fears.~~ We sail to the field so confidently. We are all going to be Pauls, and Livingstone's and Adoniram Judsons. ~~And then the frustrations of the field sweep down on us like a flood and one by one the things we had trusted in, the hopes we had tied our lives to, are swept away.~~ We look for

It was ^{is} this hope that kept Paul from discouragement and frustration in his narrow prison. I don't know what your particular prison may be ^{the prison house of Paul} for to use the other figure, what flood may threaten to sweep you away. ^{more than in jail.} But remember this, don't let your prison dictate your policy; ^{don't let the flood shape your missionary course.} In the flood, hold fast to the rope; in prison, hold fast to hope. Paul could move only as far as his chain, but with joy and hope his mind ranged free, and he was forever planning ahead for Christ, working out new missionary journeys--the next one, he says, in 1:26, will be through Philippi.

How different ^{from} with Toynbee. The trouble with him, (as the Archbishop of Canterbury rather bluntly pointed out (Frontier, Oct. 1958, p. 239f.) "is that his was a policy based entirely on fear". Paul's policy was based on hope, "eager expectation and hope" (1:20).

Toynbee ^{in his prison & fear} is afraid, first, of physical suffering, the untold and genuine miseries that nuclear war will inflict on more people than have ever suffered before. Now it is no sin to be afraid of physical suffering. ^{Paul too} Father said that before he came to Korea where it was still forbidden, at least on the books, to preach a foreign faith on pain of fearful death, ~~that~~ he told the Lord not to let him suffer torture for he was most sensitive to pain and might not be able to stand true to the faith under torment. He was afraid of suffering. ^{that it was} But ~~that did not~~ ^{dictate his} manner of mission. ~~He stood it didn't keep fat.~~ ~~alone and unafraid against stonings and shipwreck, plagues and death, for~~ Christ. Like Paul, he found in Christ that fear was conquered. Paul, too

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had been afraid of suffering, once. Three times, in agony, he fell on his knees beseeching the Lord to take from him the "thorn in the flesh" that buffeted him. The Toynbees of this world, moved only by fear of suffering, will never understand Christ's answer. Why didn't he remove the thorn? But Jesus, too, knew first-hand the problem of pain, for on a night in a garden, he too had prayed three times for a cup of suffering to be removed. So he knew how best to answer the prayer of Paul's agony. He said, "My grace is sufficient for thee". And it was. ^{From that time on Paul} ~~Now he~~ could "count ~~it gain~~" to share the sufferings of Christ. (3:8, 10) "I have learned in whatever state I am, ^{There will be content...}" (4:11) 4:13

The second lesson is, don't base missionary policy on fear of suffering for your converts. [I am afraid that this lies behind some of the pleas for recognition of Red China.] It is more unselfish than fearing for oneself, but it is still fear that dictates the compromise, not faith or hope.] Paul, the happy prisoner, with all the boldness of faith, cheerfully tells his converts, in 1:29, "It has been granted to you (as if it were a gift!) that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake."

The problem of suffering, as the Archbishop of Canterbury observed, answering Toynbee, "does not increase in difficulty as more people suffer or as people suffer more. It is not a quantitative problem at all.. The theological problem is to understand how God who is the God of mercy and pity, can tolerate that even one man, woman, or child should suffer..." And the answer to that problem is in the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord. Even suffering may have its purpose; ~~if the missionary is really willing to take up his cross and follow~~ but suffering is not the end. If the missionary would follow the Lord, he must be willing to take up the cross and say with Paul, "that I may share his suffering, becoming like him in his death, that.. I may attain the resurrection from the dead." (3:10, 11). For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." (1:21) ^{but may be harder - he must be willing to let his cross take up the cross}

Paul has an answer, as well, to Toynbee's other, greater fear; that nuclear war will destroy the human race. Again listen first to the Archbishop, and then to Paul. The Archbishop crustily remarked, "There is no evidence that the human race is to last forever, and plenty ~~in~~ Scripture to the contrary effect." He is right. Christians do not fear the end of history, however that end may come. One thing we know, the day of the ~~end~~ is also the day of the Lord, and the day of new beginning. ^{China - stand baptized}

Paul says, "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice...The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the God of peace which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (4:4-7). Take that verse with you into the nuclear age, into the mushroom cloud, and be not afraid. Rejoice!

^{There is only one thing that can keep the X. from rejoicing.}

But the fiercest prison of all is sin, not fear. Until its walls are broken down, ^{and} its chains are snapped, all the missionary's good works, his sacrifice, his missionary zeal will count for nothing. I do not need to say much about this here, for Paul does not say much about it to the Philippians. They knew, and you know, that Christ alone can free from sin. But there is a danger, particularly among good people who know better, like the Philippians-- and like missionaries--that almost unconsciously, though they do know better, they will begin to think that they have themselves earned their forgiveness from sin and their release from bondage. There is more reliance on work-righteous-

ness among missionaries, I am inclined to believe, than we like to admit. Why do I think so? Because there are too many discouraged, frustrated missionaries. The missionary who depends on himself, of course will get discouraged. The missionary who trusts in Christ has no right to discouragement. He can rejoice, and again rejoice with Paul.

309 Paul, who doesn't say much about sin and justification in this letter as in Romans, for example, does have something to say about work-righteousness. Chapter three has three warnings directed to the church in Philippi. The first is a warning against legalism, and in it he sharply ^{delivers} the righteousness that is ours in Christ, and the righteousness which we may think we have as our own. Paul reminds them that we "have no righteousness of (our) own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.." (3:9)

Righteousness of your own leaves you still chained in a darker prison any man can make for you. But if your righteousness is from God through faith in Christ, no mere prison can make you prisoner. (I am reminded of another prison-saint, Lady Julian of Norwich, that fore-runner of the English Reformation and contemporary of Wycliffe. Born to a life of luxury and sin, (for she was a child of an uncommonly casually sinful age), she fell ill at the age of thirty and was dying in great torment, when suddenly to her were given sixteen mysterious visions from God. The visions strangely healed her and filled her with such mystic joy and eagerness to help others that she received permission to dedicate her life to the service of God and her fellow-men. She gave up the world and voluntarily imprisoned herself in a small, iron-bound cell, six paces long by six paces wide, where she spent the rest of her life. "Dismal," said those who came to her at first, for she was besieged by weary, sinful souls who longed for spiritual counsel. "Not dismal at all," said those who knew her better, "for she is a most happy saint. No one is so ready to laugh as Dame Julian".

The secret of her happiness was her thirteenth vision. "I had been thinking of my sins," she said, "and I was in great sorrow. Then I saw Him. [He turned on me His face of lovely pity and He said, 'It is truth that sin is cause of all this pain... nonetheless all shall be well... These words were said to me tenderly, showing no kind of blame.] And then He said, Accuse not thyself overdone much, deeming that thy tribulation and woe is all thy fault; for I will not that thou be heavy or sorrowful indiscreetly." Then I understood that it was great disobedience to blame on God for my sin; since He blamed me not for it...")

He takes our sin on Him, and blames us no more. We are no longer prisoners of sin, and no other prison can keep us from our Lord.

There was a prison in Philippi once. They tried to keep a missionary there. A missionary who refused to act like a prisoner, who refused to recognize defeat, who sang songs in the night. And after the hymns, and after the earthquake, it was the prison-keeper, not the prisoner, who tried to commit suicide. And it was the prisoner, not the prison-keeper who opened the doors to eternal life.

Remember that when the hard days come. And whatever your particular prison may turn out to be, even in prison you are still a missionary. Keep preaching. And rejoice.

Remember that when the hard days come, And whatever your particular prison may turn out to be, Even in prison, you are still a missionary. Keep preaching. And you have the keys, in Christ. Open the doors. And Rejoice!

And the peace of God, which is above all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Samuel Rutherford, headed his letters from prison "Christ's Palace, Aberdeen" and declared that every stone in the wall shone like a ruby. (Lectures, Introp. B.B. Pilgram)

III

(17)

Bottle not here to Jesus

There are three important paradoxes in Philippi, which Paul uses to resolve the paradox with which I started the discussion - some weeks ago - the apparent paradox between a call to humility & a call to unity.

III. The Servant Lord

2: 1-8
(1:27-2:18; 3:1-21) - Samuel H. Moffatt

The nature of the vertical stripes.

Handwritten notes in a box, possibly a reference or index.

unequal but still partners - but happy

The first paradox around which this epistle revolves is that of the unequal partners; the second is that of the strangely happy prisoner. The third is the most important of all, ~~it is~~ the paradox of the Servant Lord. Here is the heart and key of the whole letter, beginning with chapter 2, especially verses 5-11. If, for example, as we did Saturday, we take as the central mood of the epistle, joy, we will find in Philippians that Christian joy is joy only in Christ, the Servant Lord. Of if, as we shall do today, we say that the theme of the epistle is unity, we will find that the Christian unity of which Paul speaks is unity only in Christ, and that its secret is "the mind of Christ", the Lord of Glory "who took on him the form of a servant."

Of these two notes characterizing the epistle--joyful reassurance in times of difficulty, and exhortation to unity--the passages we study today (1:27-2:18; 3:1-21) are in the direct line of the latter, for the all-inclusive theme is still, "Paul Calls the Church to Mission and to Unity".

Pursuing that theme, and moving on step by step artlessly and naturally, Paul leads us into the depths of the riches of one of the greatest theological passages in the Bible. This is the order of his thought:

1. Be united. (1:27-2:2) How?
2. Be humble. (2: 3,4) How?
3. Be in Christ. (2: 5-11)

The ~~first~~ emphasis is on unity--an old, familiar missionary emphasis. I was complaining the other day about the historical contradiction in "mission and unity", for mission so often proceeds out of disunity, and sometimes union ends mission. True, there is that continuing tension in the expansion of Christianity, but the history of the modern missionary movement is itself proof of a deep and necessary interconnection between mission and unity, for mission is basically discontent with disunity and it is from the mission field that the most urgent demands for unity have come, so that in the end, unity has proceeded out of mission.

We do not need to seek far for the reason. It is the evangelistic imperative on the mission field that raises the cry for unity and cooperation. Bishop Azariah the saintly evangelist of South India and the first Indian ever to become an Anglican bishop, tells of an interview he had with Dr. Ambedkar, leader of India's untouchable millions, the harijans, the outcastes. It was back in 1935. Dr. Ambedkar was about to forsake Hinduism. "Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease," he said. Would he bring his millions into the Christian faith? "Your people, deeply religious, cannot live without a religion," said Bishop Azariah. "It is not enough to give up Hinduism. They must have something else." And he

(Carry - Parivarta Baptists - but don't seem that united etc.)

offered them Christianity. Dr. Ambedkar replied, "I am well aware of all that the Christian Church has done for the outcastes... But we Harijans are one community all over India, and our strength is in our unity. Can you in the Christian Church offer us any unity comparable to that?" And the bishop was silent. *Since 1957- 2,000,000 Harijans have turned Buddhist*

That is the evangelistic imperative. In South India, Disunity was a sin, turning countless millions away from salvation in Christ. [As a matter of fact, it was only the recognition of this fact that persuaded the Anglicans to enter into the discussions there that led to the formation of the Church of South India. It was the Christian mission itself that demanded the unity.]

So it is no accident that Paul the missionary writes to Philippi pleading for unity. Just what it was in Philippi that called forth the appeal, we can only conjecture. Perhaps it was the personal quarrel between Euodia and Syntyche which 4:20 seems to indicate. We can be sure, however, that it was not doctrinal division as in Galatia, or moral weakness as in Corinth. It seems rather to have been some form of jealousy fired by the personal ambitions of some church members. To check this lack of concord before it breaks out into open schism, Paul writes the moving appeal for harmony centering about the opening verses of chapter 2.

Notice where he begins. "If there is any encouragement in Christ". He begins with Christ, and bases his whole appeal for unity on the actual union of the believer with the body of Christ. "Union with Christ," Paul is saying, "demands unity in Christian life." Modern appeals to church unity which begin anywhere but with "union in Christ" are rootless and baseless.

And second, "if any incentive of love". The first appeal is objective, our union in Christ; the second is warmly subjective. It is an appeal to that sympathetic love of the brethren which is characteristic of real Christians. Love is the best word to describe the Christian God. He is Love. Love is the best word to describe the Christian religion; it is love of God. And love is the best word to describe the Christian way of life: it is love of our fellowmen. *human beings. Love breaks through national barriers. Serves? Love breaks through racial barriers. Knows no H. we must not hate. Love breaks through our disunity and immaturity, sets us free.*

Unity in the church is built on these two cornerstones: our union with Christ, and our love of the brethren. If either one of these is missing we cannot ~~even~~ say we love God and are not rightly in the church at all. The rest of this first verse only repeats the same lesson in other words. Unity in Christ and love of the brethren, these are the foundations of unity in the church.

But what about doctrine? Isn't that also basic to union? Yes, but do not try to read too much into this passage. Paul is not talking about church re-union, after schism. He is fore-stalling schism. He is talking to a single congregation, undivided by heresies; and the basis of unity in such a group is precisely as he describes it: oneness in Christ, and love toward one another. Given these two basiss, it is for Christians (as

Phillips translates verse 2) "to live together in harmony (and) live together in love, as though (they) had only one mind and one spirit between (them)".

But that is easier said than done. It is not easy even in a Christian mission station. How are Christians actually to work out such happy harmony? The secret, says Paul in verse 3, is humility.

This is the second step in Paul's appeal. First, be united. Second, if you want to be united, you must be humble. "In humility count others better than yourselves". This is what the church should be like, says Paul, a community where nothing is done in selfishness, or conceit, but where in humility each thinks more of others than he does of himself. "A marvellous community," exclaims one commentator (Lenski, p. 772) "in which no one is looked down upon, but every one looked up to."

Does that describe your community, your station? It ought to. But how often humility, which is the indispensable ingredient in Christian living, becomes the missing ingredient in the way we actually live. "When I look back upon my own religious experience," says Andrew Murray in his little book, Humility (p. 7), "or round upon the Church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at the thought of how little humility is sought after as the distinguishing feature of discipleship of Jesus... Alas, how much proof there is that humility is not esteemed the cardinal virtue, the only root from which the graces grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus... Meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief marks by which those who follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God are known."

Tension between ... on tension as minimum ... is the most important
I wonder how much of the tension between Church and Mission in Korea is caused by lack of humility [in the missionaries. (Don't change the subject and start talking about the faults of the Koreans.)] I know we don't intend to be arrogant and proud. Quite the opposite. We're not arrogant and proud. But think of the handicap we work against. I was badly jolted one day when a Korean said to me, "Americans are always proud. Even if they weren't I wouldn't believe it, because if I had all they had, I'd be proud myself." If that is the handicap we work against, how much harder we must work to be humble.

Again easier said than done. We can't just go around muttering fiercely to ourselves, "Be humble. Be humble." It doesn't work. If humility is so necessary, if it really is the secret of unity in the church, then what in the world is the secret of humility, for that is the secret we need.

Do you remember when Paul found himself in just such a cycle of frustration. He described it to the Romans, "I don't understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... I can will what is right, but I cannot do it... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death."

And remember also the triumphant answer: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The answer is always Christ. The secret of humility is Christ. Be united. How? Be humble. How? Be in Christ. "Have this mind in you which is also in Christ Jesus."

Philippians

The usual interpretation of this difficult verse is to take it as an appeal to the example of Jesus Christ. That is the sense of the King James version, and that sense is not entirely foreign to this passage. The example is there. But the example is not enough. And besides, the example of Christ is not an ordinary Pauline pattern of thought. (See M. Hollis, "A Further Note on Philippians 2:5" in Indian Journal of Theology, VII, 4, 1958). "He does not argue that Christians can do something because Jesus has done it, in the sense that what man has done man can do". Paul is more radical and dynamic than that. What Paul says, over and over again, is that Christians can do what was before impossible because they are "in Christ", new men in Christ. ["The humanly impossible (humility, unity) is possible because they are in Christ".]

The RSV translates the verse better, "Have this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus". In other words, let your mutual relationships be governed not by your natural minds--the old nature--but by the new nature, the mind which is yours in Christ.

Then follows the great passage which is the glory of the epistle--the description of the humility which can be ours when we are in Christ. It is poetry, really. The style stands out sharply from the casual manner of the rest of the letter. The first Christian hymn, some call it,--every phrase measured, every word exact and balanced. If you really want to catch the flavor of the original, read Milton, not our prose translation:

"That glorious Form, that Light insufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heavn's high Council-Table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksome House of mortal Clay."
(--"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity")

Phil. 2:5-8.

These great verses form one of the most profound Christological passages in the whole Bible, but they are no academic text in theology; Paul uses them not to teach theology primarily, but to teach a very practical truth about Christian living in a very practical situation. It is a very lofty passage used to teach a very lowly truth, humility. Theology may be the queen of the sciences; more important, it is the handmaid of Christian living.

But why so powerful a passage to teach so meek a little virtue? It sweeps back the curtain of the ages to reveal the pre-existent Christ. It focusses at the hinge of history on the incarnate Christ. It moves on in majesty to the end of time with the exalted Christ. Why all this to teach humility?

Paul begins with the pre-existent Christ, I think, to give ethical meaning to the humiliation. It is precisely because Christ was God that his becoming a servant had meaning. There is no humility in a servant being a servant. And even less in a man becoming God, as some of the modern Adoptionist heresies would have it.

How can the Unitarians say that the Bible does not teach the deity of

Christ. Here is our earliest glimpse of him, back before the mountains were brought forth or ever the earth and the world began, and He is God, very God of very God. It is only the English which is ambiguous, with its "existing in the form of God". The Greeks, analytical as always, had two separate words for "form". One refers to outer shape, and changes "as when a cloud takes the form of a mountain" (Interpreters Bible). That is not the one used here. Paul uses the other (morphe), the kind of form that expresses what the object really is. If Christ has the form of God in this sense, ~~that~~ God is what he really is. Phillips translates it, "He who had always been God by nature..."

He who had always been God...became man. The Lord of Glory "took on him the form of a servant." Once again the word "form". It means he really was a servant, not just masquerading as one, as that "reverse" unitarianism of the Coptic church would have us believe. The Copts virtually deny the real humanity of Christ. Isolated, introverted, superstitious and selfish, they are an object lesson to the church on what will happen to it if it forgets that God became a servant. It simply ceases to be relevant. The pre-existence of Christ makes the humiliation ethical; the incarnation makes it relevant. *(just how relevant we Presbyterians are during of two years in our study time.)* *God became a servant. Be*

In 1956 a committee of the World Alliance of Presbyterian Churches met ~~behind the curtain~~, in Prague, trying to choose a theme for its 18th General Council which will meet next month in Brazil. They were looking for a theme that would be equally vital for all the 45,000,000 Presbyterian and Reformed Christians of the world, the second largest confessional family of churches in Protestantism. They were looking for a theme that would be as relevant to the brethren in Prague behind the curtain as to those in Brazil, under the shadow of Rome, or to us right here in Korea. ~~It was this~~ passage that they finally fitted the specifications. They linked it with Isaiah 53, and John 13, and chose as the theme for the Quadrennium, "The Servant Lord and His Servant People". *be careful you interpret*

It is relevant in Prague, I know, ~~for it spoke to us in power back in Red China.~~ This is ~~the~~ one point at which the still small voice of God outshouts even the communists and their propaganda.

When Whittaker Chambers was asked by one of the jurors at the Hiss trial "What does it mean to be a communist?", this was part of his answer: "It means to be like Djerjinsky.." Who was Djerjinsky. He is a communist hero, a young man in a Tsarist prison in Warsaw who insisted on being given the dirty job of cleaning the latrines. "Why", asked the warden, surprised. "Because," he said, "it is the duty of the most developed member of any community to take upon himself the lowliest tasks." *[The communist must be ready to clean the latrines.]* *But that is not communism.*

As I read that, my mind ^{went} ~~reluctantly snapped~~ back to the 13th chapter of John with its record of a time when Jesus was trying to teach his disciples what it really means to be a Christian. There was not much time. It was near the end. You remember what he did. He asked for a basin, and water, and took over for himself the lowliest task at hand. He washed the disciple's feet.

We don't hear very much about foot-washing any more in the Christian

(church. Why? Have we abandoned the "Servant" theme to the communists? They think so.) I remember when the communists rolled over us in Peking. Knowing what propaganda use they made of our "capitalistic luxuries", one of our friends, Hal Leiper, did everything he could to simplify his living standards. He got rid of his furniture, his rugs; ~~his gas stove~~ he ate the simplest of food, wore the simplest of clothes--and waited proudly to make his point. But he still shakes his head wryly at the memory of the first communist soldier who came in. "An imperialist?" said Hal. "No. Look." And he swept his hand around at the bare house. "We are here to serve you, not to become rich. We are servants." And the little soldier smiled and looked at his shoes. That's all; just looked at his shoes. And Hal looked down finally, too, and his heart sank. His were leather; the soldier was wearing frayed old canvas tennis shoes.

It is not the things you give up that count for humility. Humility is in the heart. That is what counts. Theologians have spent too much time arguing about the "kenosis" in these verses, about just what it was that Christ emptied himself of, here where it says, "He emptied himself" (vs. 7). Was it his glory that he laid aside, or his omnipotence; his divine attributes, or his relative attributes? Paul brushes all such speculation aside. "He emptied himself" is what the passage says. He poured himself out in utter self-sacrifice for us, as water is poured from a vase. *This is the kind of love we must have as Christians. The mind of Christ.*

And now in verse 8, the climax: ~~of the humility of the Servant Lord, the depth of humiliation.~~ He became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". The emptying is complete: he poured out his soul unto death. The obedience of course is to God, not to death, as the English might imply, "obedient unto death". "Christ did not obey death; he abolished it." (Moule, see II Tim. 1:10).

"The death of the cross". I wonder if there is not a peculiar poignancy to the phrase as used in this epistle. Paul was a Roman. The Philippians to whom he was writing were Romans too, for Philippi was a colony, and enjoyed all the rights of the jus Italicum. Neither Paul nor the Philippians could ever be sentenced to crucifixion. It was too humiliating a death for a Roman. So much greater the impact, then, of the example of the Servant Lord. What they could never be asked to suffer for Him, He suffered for them. And what does He ask in return? Humility. It is as important as that.

~~All this to teach humility.~~ Yes, and more. When we turn to chapter 3, with its three paragraphs, each paragraph a warning: the first (vs. 2-11) a warning against legalism; the second (vs. 12-16) a warning against perfectionism; the third (vs. 17-21) a warning against licentiousness--even here the underlying lesson is humility.

Each of these
 Every warning is basically a warning against pride. Legalism? ^{Legalism} It is nothing but pride, pride in the law and pride in the flesh, says Paul. "Glory in Christ and put no confidence in the flesh." "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." That is humility.

Perfectionism? It is nothing but pride in one's self, one's own accomplishments. I am not perfect, says Paul. "I count not myself to have apprehended (here I prefer the KJV) but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward

... I have forgotten those things which are behind and reach forward to those things which are ahead, I press on toward the goal...

the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And that, too, is humility.

Licentiousness? ~~There can be pride even in grace.~~ "Let us sin that grace may abound", some were saying in Rome. That is not the pride of grace, says Paul, that is the pride of shame. ~~"They glory in their shame"~~ "Their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame." (3:19) "But our commonwealth is in heaven..." We are subject of him who "subjects all things to himself." Servants of the Servant Lord. That is what it means to be humble.

The Servant Lord

Relevant Bible.

It can be as important in mission as well - in the witness

Peasant in Bern in 1528 when Swiss were deciding for or against the Reformation. 2 peasants watch a procession: "a man poorly clad riding on a donkey." Here is the dialogue —

1st peasant: Who is that poor fellow on the donkey. He wears a plain gray cloak and on his head he has a wreath of thorns. He goes, the lame, and the blind following him. He turns his face away. For all he has a word of cheer and he rides so humbly on his beast. Tell me who he is, for Jesus' sake.

2^d peasant: Why, that's just who he is, gentle, meek, kind, comforting and full of cheer. He is the Saviour of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ.

"The procession passes and is followed by another of horsemen and footmen, with blowing of trumpets and beating of drums

1st peasant: Who is the mighty emperor followed by so many soldiers. Were it not for the priests I'd say they were Turks with their elegant clothes.... The leader has a 3-layer crown of gold. He rides on a horse and is warlike and wild. Can you tell me who he is?

2^d peasant: Why yes, he is the representative on earth of the man on the donkey." (Barrett, Ch. of our Father, p. 145 f.)

Berne got the point, and voted for the Reformation. May we so depict ourselves as ~~represent~~ ^{represent} servants of the man on the donkey that ~~Brazil~~ ^{Korea} will get the point too.

IV. THE OMNIPOTENT SLAVE

(1:1; 4:13; 2: 9-13) 16

The final paradox of the epistle is found in two verses, one at the beginning, and one near the end of the letter. "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ.." (1:1). The word is actually stronger than servant: "Paul.. a slave of Jesus Christ.." That is how the epistle begins. And it closes with that slave saying, near the end, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." Only a slave, but he can do all things. The omnipotent slave! But the two are connected and amplified by a passage in chap. 2 (9-13) in that the proposition thought becomes (as we apply the lesson to ourselves) as misunderstood.

1:1 1) We are slaves of Xt.
2) of whom? The expected Xt.
2:9-11 3) Work - That's what a slave does
4:13 4) Don't grumble about not being able to do it. God makes us you.
5) That's why you can say with Paul "I can do all things in Xt."

4:13

This is just the reverse of the letter's great central figure, the Servant Lord. The Lord becomes a servant; but the servant's slave becomes almighty.

It reminds me something of Luther's powerful words to the German nobility: "The Christian man is most free Lord of all, and servant to none; the Christian man is of all, and servant to everyone."

~~The path to power is through humility~~ The New Testament way to power is to become the servant, the slave, the captive of the Servant Lord.

"Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free
Force me to render up my sword, and I shall conqueror be.

I sink in life's alarms when by myself I stand
Imprison me within Thine arms, and strong shall be my stand.

My heart is weak and poor, until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure—it varies with the wind;

It cannot freely move till thou hast wrought its chain
Enslave it with thy matchless love, and deathless it shall reign."

"I can do all things in (Christ) who strengthens me". I like the way the new version says "in" instead of "through", but I like the old version's "Christ" better than the new version's "him". As always in Paul's epistles the secret of power is that little phrase, "in Christ". Count the number of times it, or its equivalent, occurs in this one short letter (11). "In Christ". To Paul, the missionary partner, that was the secret of partnership. To Paul, the ~~happy~~ prisoner, that was the secret of joy. ~~It is also the~~ secret of power, for he knew the power was not his, but Christ's, and his only "in Christ", the Servant Lord.

But ~~when we left~~ the Servant Lord, ~~yesterday he was dying~~ ^{did} on a cross. Emptied, humbled, poured out, abandoned--the Servant Lord was dead. Why, then, speak of power? "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." That is no way to describe power, is it?

No, but that is where power begins. ^{The power of the resurrection begins with the emptying} When Paul, writing to the Corinthians

says Paul in another letter,
~~describes the mightiest power on earth, the power of the resurrection,~~
~~he begins with the emptying of death:~~ "What you sow does not come to
 life unless it dies." (I Cor. 15:36). Power and life begin with death.
 "There is power in the blood," the old chorus says, ^{and} "The cross is not the
 end. We stopped too soon in our reading of the great passage, yesterday. (2:5-

"He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born
 in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he
 humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on
 a cross." But don't stop with verse 8. Read on.

"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him
 the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus
 every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the
 earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father."

This, the epistle's key passage, is like a great three-panelled screen,
 curiously constructed, for two of the panels are of shining gold, while
 the center panel, ^{at the center} which is in the place of honor, is made of wood, just
 wood—old blackened wood, at that, the wood of a cross. On this side,
 the pre-existent Christ in glory—gold and ivory. In the center, the
 incarnation—"out of the ivory palaces into a world of woe", woe and
 death, death on a wooden cross. But the third panel is shining gold again:
 the exaltation. "Christ empties Christ," observes Bengel; "God exalted
 Christ". The Lord becomes a servant, yes, but the servant becomes Lord.

"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the
 name..." Not much of a reward, you may say—a name. But wait, is there
 any higher reward? ~~Money?~~ After the war a real estate firm offered
 Robert E. Lee a salary of \$25,000 a year (a huge sum in those days) to be-
 come a member of the company. He protested that his services could not
 possibly be worth that much. After all, what did he know about real es-
 tate? "Your name is what is valuable to us," they said, and were shocked
 when he turned them down flat. "Gentlemen," said Lee, "my name is not for
 sale."

Lee's name was above price, but that was only a human name. The
 name given the Servant is Lord, the name above every name, the sacred
 tetragrammaton. [And He who was last is become first] Have you noticed
 that even in non-Christian lands where Christian doctrine is sharply
 attacked, ~~even the~~ the Church is often persecuted, men are ^{usually} careful not to
 criticize the name of Jesus. ^{They} Even the communists, ^{or not observe them} instead of attacking
 the name, tried to use it. How hard their propagandists worked trying to
 capture Jesus for the revolution. "He was a carpenter's son," they said,
 "a working man, born to the proletariat. He was the first martyr of the
 revolution, caught up in the struggle against imperialism and put to death
 by the imperialists." ^{But how they tried to explain him in order to free him} There is still such power in the name that even the
 communists seek to borrow something of its power.

And we who bear the name, how much of its power do we carry? We
 like to think of the world mission of the Church of Jesus Christ in terms
 of power, and witness, and overwhelming results. I came across a sentence
 some time ago that describes what we want. It was the report of an African
 evangelist. "We did not begin to preach," he said, until we had called for
 the power of God... That power came; we took it and went forth to preach.
 People came

"But as Paul says in 31 (a corrupt, verse to repetitive preacher) - "to say the same things to you is not likewise
 to me, and is safe for you." It is no sin to repeat.

Philippians (4)

People came confessing Jesus like the fish of the sea in number." That is how we like to think of our mission here, in terms of resurrection, pentecostal power. "I can do all things..." That is what we would like. But what do we have. To listen to some of our mission meetings (I am not talking about yours) you would think that what we have is not power, but problems!

There are three frustrations every Peace Corps member faces, said someone recently. The first is Diarrhea. The second is Language. And the third is the frustration of trying to help people who won't learn how to help themselves.

These, or frustrations very much like them, will be yours for much of your missionary life. What an agonizing adjustment it is from the image of the missionary calling as we romantically imagined it, back there before we came to the field--heroic, sacrificial, all-conquering--~~and~~ the missionary calling as we too often prosaically and frustratingly find it in reality.

I remember the shock of discovering a few years ago, the great gulf between me, as one of my supporting churches was imagining me, and me as I actually am! One day as I was beginning work in Andong I opened an envelope from a church in Ohio, and out tumbled a little plastic badge for the lapel, with a picture of my landrover careening down a dusty, country road, and in large letters the words, PIONEER WITH MOFFETT, across the face of it. All members of the church had been issued these buttons to remind them of their missionary, far away on the battle line, the pioneer out on the frontier. ~~And Me? I was ashamed.~~ Pioneer? They were a whole generation too late, as far as I was concerned. I was no pioneer. All I was doing was fighting a desperate rear-guard action in the Korean language. I had just been elected president of the Bible Institute (over my frantic protests), and I was supposed to give a chapel talk, and I couldn't even pray in Korean in chapel.

I am afraid it was all my fault. I suppose I had pretty well pictured myself as a pioneer in some rousing speech at that church before I left. But it did not help my frustrations of the moment to be reminded of those earlier illusions as I compared them with the harsh, grinding realities of my life on the frontier as it really was. We all have to make that adjustment. *between dream + reality in those first hard years on the field.*

But beware. Don't adjust too much. Look at Paul. ~~I suppose you can laugh at him as much as at me.~~ Look who's talking about "I can do all things..." A sick and tired prisoner who can't move more than a few feet in any direction from the iron rings that chains him to the stone. A man who is going to die much sooner than he thinks. "Adjust, Paul. Face up to where you are, and ~~just~~ ^{to} what ^{little} you really can do." Is that what we should be saying to him?

No. The real meat of this epistle is in its apparent irrationalities. Precisely when the situation is hopeless, Paul says "Hope; rejoice." Precisely when there is nothing that he can do, he says, "I can do all things..." It is when he becomes a slave, precisely at that moment, that he becomes ~~omnipotent~~. *a man of over-arching power.*

Don't ~~disregard~~ ^{shun off} the harsh realities, the grim frustrations of the mission field as it actually is. ✓ But beware lest in the necessary and oft-

But don't gumble about them, says Paul (vs. 14)

times disillusioning process of adjustment ~~to the realities of the field~~, you let your standards fall with your illusions. However low the actualities of the situation may bring you, your calling is as high as ever. Don't forget it. And there are times when we need a few bugle-call reminders of the high prize that is ours--this "high calling", as Paul calls it in chapter 3, verse 14: the "high calling of God in Christ Jesus".

When the horizontal aspects of the call leave you tired and irritable; when the work to which you are called loses its glamour and you first discover that your own believing colleagues are as hard to work with as the non-believing heathen--then perhaps it is time to stand straight and remember the vertical. Your call comes from ~~God~~ no man, for you or against you. Your call is from God. "And if God be for you, who can be against you." When the problems outside overwhelm you, turn to the ~~Christ within~~ ^{Christ} within--"Christ in you, ~~the hope of glory~~" and you in Christ. That's where the power is.

I like the belea 4 vs. 12 & 13. It's sent 4 a Meth. belea, with it. Not a bad combination.

And that is where your missionary call is. Not with the Board at home, not even with the Korean church to which you are sent. It begins with God in Christ. There is no higher calling than that. "If God has called you to be a missionary," said Spurgeon, "don't stoop to be a king!"

With that kind of a call, and our kind of a God, what do your little first-term failures--or second, or third-term--matter? I remember

Latourette saying once that none of the great missionaries died with a sense of frustration. Of course they had not accomplished a fraction of what they set out with such high hopes to do. There was still no Christian world. But they died in faith that God who had called them was able to accomplish far more through them simply because they had gone, than if they had not answered the call and "committed themselves to the unattainable".

You can do "all things in Christ". More can come from the little faltering things you start in faith now, than even you think possible. I never heard my father, for example, speak of the Song Dok Primary School. Perhaps he thought it was one of his failures--a frustration, better forgotten than remembered. But a few months ago when I spoke at Seoul's Rotary Club to a group of the capital city's leading and most responsible citizens, at the end six men stood up and, in Rotary fashion, fined themselves. Why? "Because," they said, "it was our privilege to graduate together from your father's school, the Song Dok Primary School in Pyengyang."

I was astonished. There were two former Cabinet ministers among them--an Attorney General and a Minister of Commerce, often called the 'brains' of the Democratic party. There was a vice-president of one of Korea's greatest universities. There were two outstanding medical doctors, a dentist and a most successful pediatrician. There was even Korea's best-known movie scriptwriter, a dramatist. And all of them are Christians. Father died without ever knowing what came out of that little, discouraging school of his. He didn't have to know. He could leave that to God, because his calling came from God, and the power was not in himself. It was in Christ

I have sometimes wondered what Jesus meant in John 14:12, where

Philippians (4)

he says, "He who believes in me will also do the works that I do: and greater works than these will he do..." What "greater works" than Jesus can a man possibly do? The Philippian answer is "the ^{works that God does in him +} works that he does in ~~Jesus~~, in Christ". And I like to think that those words of Jesus refer, perhaps, to the missionary proclamation of the gospel to the whole world. Jesus did not preach the gospel to the ~~whole~~ world. The Servant Lord, we are told, was sent only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel". He deliberately restricted his mission to a tiny segment of the globe. It is to us--omnipotent slaves in Christ, missionaries--that is given this greater work--the mission to the world. And that mission does not, and cannot, end in failure.

Anything you need to ensure the success of your mission God will supply. That is the apostolic promise, in Philippians. Phil. 4:19. "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

Absolutely limitless are the resources that are ours in Him. "Every need" supplied; ~~You can do~~ "all things". ^{are possible.} Take a quick look now through the letter and note some of the ~~things~~ ^{resources} that are yours in Christ:

- 1) Begin with sainthood (1:1) "saints in Christ Jesus". You don't act like it but you are. As A.M. Hunter says, "'saints' in its N.T. sense means not people wearing halos but committed Christians."
- 2) (1:11) "righteousness", "filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ". It is his righteousness, not yours, that makes you saints. Stop worrying about your faults and weaknesses. Overcome them, cover them, with this righteousness".
- 3) (1:21) "life". "To me to live is Christ". So stop acting dead. Get up, live, stop complaining about the decline of the mission.
- 4) (2:5) "humility". "this mind..which you have in Christ Jesus". This too, this key to peace and unity in the church, is ours in Christ. Stop worrying about division, accept this key to unity, and act with it.
- 5) (3:1) "joy". "Rejoice in the Lord". This will carry you through the rough spots.
- 6) (4:7)"peace". "And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus".
- 7) (4:13) "power". "I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me."

All this is yours in Jesus Christ: life, joy, peace, power... What more do you need? So talk no more about failure.

look at what has already been accomplished. Just a little more than a century ago - in 1850 - in all the world of the younger church - in Asia, Africa and Latin America - there were only 200,000 Protestant Christians. Today there are almost 30,000,000. An increase in just a century of 1,500%. We can do all things in Christ.

Or take Korea. Complain all you want about the problems of the church, but remember to thank God that there is a church to have problems. There wasn't 100 years ago.

Last year - after wave upon wave of schism after schism had practically torn our poor church to pieces ~~has~~, leaving most of us about as discouraged as missionaries can get, one of our pastors with all the name and artless confidence of an Apostle Paul came up with this impossible plan which he laid before the church:

In another 20 years - in 1984 - we will

be celebrating 100 years of Protestant missions in Korea. By that same year, 1984, he said, if we will, we can, in Christ, make Korea the first Protestant ~~Korea~~ ^{Christian} country in Asia.

Well, of course it's impossible. As soon as we heard him we thought of any number of ^{perfectly sound} reasons ^{for believing} his plan could never work. The Chh in Korea is weak and divided. It is losing the students. It is falling behind numerically in the population explosion. Political conditions are unfavorable. ~~But if you have read Phil~~

But if you have read Philippians seriously, he is right and we are ~~wrong~~ the ones who are wrong.

There are more ^{Methodists} Christians in Seoul today than ^{there were} ~~in~~ Xns in the whole world of Paul's day. And ^{you're} ~~we're~~ not in prison. ~~But~~ ^{that} we say, "one little country cannot be won for Christ." Paul says the whole world will be His. For "at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess the Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The Lord cheers up. The Lord, an old saint once told
me has no right to say "under the circumstance." - Over.

Paul who can look through prison bars, at a
divided club - and still see every knee bowing, every tongue confessing -
is looking at you - "shine as lights in the world" he says (2:15)
but all the while he says a greater light - the light of
the "day of Christ" and his eye is on his Lord - the Son of
God, the Lord of the Name. At the name of Jesus....

The resources are all ours in Christ. Look through the apostle, jot down the things that are yours in Christ and don't talk any more about failure.

- 1) Begin with sanctification - 1:1 - "saints in Christ Jesus". You don't act like it, but you are.
- 2) 1:11 - righteousness - that's what makes you saints - "the righteousness" Stop worrying about your faults & weaknesses. Overcome them, cover them with his righteousness.
- 3) 1:21 - life. To me to live is Christ. So stop acting dead. Get up, live, stop complaining about the decline of the mission.
- 4) 2:5 humility. This too is ours in Christ. The key to winning all peace in the world. Stop worrying about G.A., start praying accept the key and go on to G.A. in faith.
- 5) 3:1 joy. Rejoice in the Lord. This will carry you through the rough spots.
- 6) 4:7 peace. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in X. Jesus."
- 7) 4:13. power "I can do all things ~~with~~ⁱⁿ X.

All this is yours in Jesus Christ. So talk no more about failure. Look again at the world. -

- 1) 1850 - 200,000 on 3 cents. 959 - 28,000,000.
- 2) L. Am. - Brazil, vastest young continent in world
- 3) India - 400 a day.
- 4) Korea -

If you're discouraged. Think of Paul - prison, old man the end. Perhaps with the eye of youth - he looked down the years.

No, I think his eye was not on us. But on his word - the Great God and and also the Lord of the Name - "At the name of Jesus.."

People came confessing Jesus like the fish of the sea in number." That is how we all like to think of our mission, in terms of resurrection power. But how far do the real facts of the case bear out that optimistic picture of the field. That is what we would like; but is it what we've got?

I stand before you, I am afraid, as a depressing reminder of what may be the real facts of the case. After all, which is the truer symbol of the world Christian mission of our time; those African evangelists, incredibly successful fishers of men, reaping great harvests out of the human sea for Christ--are they the symbol of our missionary times; or am I? I am a missionary on the run. I went out bravely to win China for Christ and in my own spectacularly successful fashion, within 14 months of my arrival we had lost China to the communists. I don't want to take the entire credit for that; but that is what happened. I am sort of a perpetual first-term missionary. I am always in language school, first one, than another. I am always beginning and never finishing. I am a very poor object lesson in missions.

Once we had 8000 missionaries in China. Now we have one--a broken, brainwashed man, staying confusedly in China and no longer a missionary. That is not power; that is failure. We talk still about the power of the Lord; but how many of us really ask for it? How many really get it?

There may be bright spots, like ~~the world of~~ those African evangelists, ~~but as for the total picture, they say~~ we are still failing in Africa, and that Mohammedanism is growing faster than Christianity there. Some say we are failing in Latin America. No long before I sailed to Korea I talked to a missionary who had just come home on furlough from that continent. "Our mood is pessimism and despair," he said. 52 Protestant martyrs in six years in Colombia; 43 chapels and churches destroyed by fire or dynamite; 120 Protestant primary schools closed by violence or government order. Isn't that failure? Aren't we being wiped out?

Some say we are failing out on the frontier; that though it is true that we have built up tidy little mission stations, neatly organized, subsidized and institutionalized, they are no longer radiating, outreaching centers of the Christian faith. They tell us that we in the major churches have abandoned to the sects and the independents the great outer rim of the unreached places of the lost. Have we left the pioneering to others?

I have a cousin in New York, and anthropologist and explorer. Several summers ago, with a holy, scientific zeal he set out alone on a one-man expedition for the Explorers' Club to track down an untouched stone-age tribe in the jungles of Brazil. Friends begged him to take a gun. He refused. He took only a bow-and-arrow which he didn't even know how to shoot. [When he found his tribe, he discovered to his embarrassment that they didn't wear clothes. "So I took off my own; I couldn't afford to have them think I was hiding anything," he explained to Suzy, his long-suffering wife. "After all, the last explorer that went through there they murdered. So he found his tribe and lived with them for six weeks and came out with "his youth renewed like the eagle". "Most wonderful experience

I've ever had," he said. As he told me the story, all aglow, one thing kept bothering me. He said he hadn't found any missionaries around there. I checked up later, and could find information about only one Protestant attempt to reach those particular tribes—and I read about it not in Presbyterian Survey, or Presbyterian Life, or The Christian Century, but in The Moddy Monthly. If we have abandoned the geographical frontier to the scientists and the sects, then I say we have failed. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world."

Some say we are failing at home. Once we Presbyterians, for example, were sending out 100 new missionaries a year. Last year we sent out, I think, about 60, and the year before that 34. Once we had over 1600 overseas missionaries; today we have barely over 1000. What's the matter with the Presbyterians. TEAM is sending out over 200 missionaries a year these days. We're the ones who are failing. Have we ceased to believe that we can do "all things" through Christ who strengthens us?

Does the heroic story of the modern missionary movement end with us, in failure and decline? "Is the missionary done for?" asks the lead article in Colliers some time ago. Is that the way it ends? With the whimpering cry of a missionary who thinks we are through?

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang, but a whimper."

Is that the way it ends? Have we failed? Is the power gone?

Part of the answer came to me one day as I was listening to Mozart's Requiem Mass on the radio. The announcer told us some of the story of the composer's life. Mozart died young, in abject poverty. Five people came to his funeral. But there were 18 bodies with him in the grave, for his body was dumped with 18 others into a common, unmarked pauper's grave. But was Mozart a failure.

Paul looked like a failure too. A failure to his father, apparently a wealthy man, who saw his son run off with a pack of penniless fishermen. A failure to his teacher, Gamaliel, who saw his most brilliant pupil turn fanatic with a group of Galileans who couldn't even write good Greek. And a failure, certainly to his Emperor, who beheaded him.

But was Paul a failure? The Church has been built up by failures like that. By men who to the world seemed failures because they had given up all to become slaves of Jesus Christ. It was to men whom the world called failures, to men who called themselves slaves, that Jesus gave the world. "The meek shall inherit the earth."

I have sometimes wondered what Jesus meant in John 14 where he says, "He who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do..." (14:12). What "greater works" than Jesus can a man possibly do? The most appealing suggestion, to me, is that this refers to the missionary proclamation of the gospel to the whole world. The Servant Lord was not sent "but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He deliberately restricted his mission to a tiny segment of the globe. To us, omnipotent slaves in Christ is given the greater work—the mission to the world. And that mission does not and cannot end in failure.

'In Christ'

- 1.1 - saints in Christ Jesus. - sainthood
1.4 - righteousness through Jesus Christ - righteousness
to live in him. - life
1-3, 33 you - a
2.1 encouraged in Christ
2.5 you "mind in Christ" - humility
2.19 I hope in the Lord Jesus ...
2:29 receive him 'in the Lord'
3.1 rejoice in the Lord - joy
in him. . . righteousness - righteousness
3:14 God in Christ Jesus
4.1 firm in the Lord
4.7 peace. . . in Christ peace
4:10 rejoice in the Lord
4.13
4:19 rejoice in glory in Christ Jesus.

Presbyterian Mission, Andong
APO 13, San Francisco, Cal.
(for letters only)
December, 1955

Dear Friends:

Thank you for all the Christmas cards and letters that have been pouring in on us. In return, we would like to tell you a Christmas story from Korea.

It is about a Christmas Eve in Death Row, and a murderer's last minute conversion. If that sounds overly melodramatic to you, we can only say in defense that melodrama is the ordinary stuff of life out here, and that what may be too vivid for you is only normal in Korea. I remember, for example, a chance acquaintance on the train telling me in a matter-of-fact way how he had seized his own brother captive in a file of surrendering communist soldiers. Torn apart by the 38 parallel; pushed into opposite sides of the war; they ended up facing each other at gunpoint. (If I say it in a B-movie I'd laugh skeptically; out here it really happens.)

But to get back to Death Row and the murderer. It makes a sequel to a sketch about our fellow-missionary, Otto DeCamp, which I did for the Princeton Spire a while ago. Otto was arrested back in 1941 for resisting the Japanese when they tried to force Shinto worship on Korean Christians. He was torn from his bride of two months, held incommunicado for six weeks and sentenced to ten months at hard labor. The sentence was finally suspended, but not until after a three-month ordeal of filth and strain in Seoul's notorious West Gate prison had left its mark on him, and not until its bleak, block cells and dirty, flea-bitten, hollow-eyed prisoners were indelibly etched on his mind. Some day, he vowed, he would do something for them.

The sequel begins fifteen years or so later when another prisoner is thrown into that same squalid jail. This one, however, deserves it; he is a murderer. Discharged from the Korean Navy and brutal series of small crimes. His slow mind burned with a particular antipathy to Christians for no other reason, it seems, than that he was once awakened at dawn by church bells calling the faithful to daybreak prayers and then could not go back to sleep.

There was one influence that might have redeemed him. He fell in love with a pretty Sunday School teacher, but when she excused herself one evening from a date in order to prepare for a Christmas program, he casually and cruelly shrugged her out of his life. After that he was lost. When at last he was picked up by the police for murder and condemned to death he did not even bother to appeal the sentence, and on Christmas Eve was waiting sullenly in his cell for the day of execution --when suddenly he heard the angels sing!

It was no angel, of course; it was only a radio. But it was to have as startling an effect on Kim's life as any angel song. By this time, you see, Otto DeCamp had fulfilled his vow. He had returned to Korea after the war with the major assignment of building and directing hKRY, Korea's first Christian radio station. To his office one day about two years ago came an official from the West Gate prison with a request. Could hKRY donate a radio to the prison to bring a little music into the drab lives of the prisoners?

Presbyterian Mission, Building
AFC 13, San Francisco, Calif.
(for letters only)
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"You all" if Paul was a Baptist - as some of you like to believe - in Persia, as others prefer to dream - he was a S. Baptist or a South Persia 5 towns, in chap. 1 - "You all".

Introduction

But now look back 1400 yrs. It is 50 A.D. A man from Asia - bald, near-sighted, perhaps limping (there are all sorts of traditions & guesses about what Paul really meant by his "thorn in the flesh") - steps ashore at Nicaeopolis, and the gospel enters a new continent.

Do you remember your Shakespeare?

"There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows & in miseries..."

~~Shakespeare~~ These words were spoken on the road to Philippi ^{Shakespeare puts} (42 AD). He slid them into the mouth of Brutus - but Brutus died at Philippi. He slid have put them into the mouth of Paul - who took the tide at flood and brought the first gospel message to Europe at Philippi.

Philippi changed the whole history of the world - [I could speak of] as a secular historian who might say the Roman Empire began at Philippi - there as Brutus died ^{Partly} Philippi changed the world ^{even} more significantly than that. Suppose Paul had not come to Philippi. Suppose he had gone with Thomas to India - or ^{with} Thaddeus to Edessa. For a while you know it looked as if Asia was going to be the 2nd continent... Africa.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men, but it was not with Brutus - not even with Thomas in India. The tide of history was with this little near-sighted man, landing unheralded, no trumpets blowing at Nicaeopolis." * (p. 2)

Philippians - 2 2 22 2 2 2

CHAPTER I. ~~INTRODUCTION~~ TROUBLED TIMES (An Introduction)

The Letter to the Philippians was written from Rome probably about 62 A.D., only thirty years after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and halfway through the reign of the Emperor Nero.

The nineteen hundred years that have passed since then have changed the world in almost everything but its anxieties. Today's man may conquer space, but he still wrestles as unsuccessfully as the Romans and the Philippians with the harder problems of war and poverty and ^{loss of freedom and} unhappiness and [^] doubts about the ultimate meaning of life.

The Anxious World of the First Century. Like ours, the age of the apostle was an age of war. Rome was the strongest power on earth, but it was discovering to its surprise that it takes more than an army to keep the world at peace. At the edges of its strength, on the far borders, there was always war. What Viet Nam ^{and Cambodia + Uganda are} is to the world today, the British Isles and Armenia were to Rome while Paul was writing to Philippi. He was writing to a city that knew war at first hand, a city of soldiers and their families. Philippi had been chosen by the Emperor as a home for veterans of Rome's wars. There were men still living there who had fought against Antony and Cleopatra. It is not surprising therefore to note how often he uses martial language in the letter. Epaphroditus "fellow-soldier" (2:25); "departure of the gospel" (1:10); "In life as war" (1:27 ff.)

Like ours also that age was an age of uneasy extremes of wealth and ^{Real freedom was enjoyed by only the privileged few.} poverty. [^] The Emperor Nero could spend the equivalent of \$175,000 on Egyptian roses for just one banquet, yet one out of every ^{three or} four persons in Rome was a slave. As Rome's wealth increased, its virtue seemed to disappear. The cities decayed. Women were warned to stay off the streets of Rome at night. Every pleasure and every vice was available. Philippi, as a Roman colony had privileged status and had become a little Rome with all the trappings and

temptations of Roman baths and theaters and Dionysian revels. Note how Paul warns the church there against the enticements of luxury, the "god of the belly" (Phil. 3:19), and encourages the Philippians in the right use of money^{Ph. 4.14-15).}

Like ours it was an age of rapid social change. Philippi saw the fading of "the glory that was Greece". It had been founded in northern Greece (Macedonia) by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. Now it had passed into the hands of Rome, but though the language of the city was Latin the country people still spoke Greek. The West of that day was being Romanized, as the world of today is being Westernized. There were many who bemoaned the changing of the times, but not Paul. At Philippi he wasted no time lamenting the passing of the old, but used the new Roman ways to the advantage of the gospel. (Acts 16)

Rome itself was changing from Republic to Empire, and the city of Philippi had figured prominently in the change, for it was on the plains about the city that one of the decisive battles of history took place. There, about one hundred years before the coming of Paul, ~~the first Emperor,~~ ^{the first Emperor and the} Augustus, nephew of Julius Caesar, defeated the last Republican, Brutus, and Rome moved from democracy to dictatorship. ^{Roman freedom began to disappear - a bit - by 100 B.C.} Its age of rugged individualism ^{The age of freedom Roman freedom.} came to an end. Emperors shook off the authority of the Senate and ruled like Oriental despots. By the time Paul wrote this letter they were even beginning to be worshiped like Oriental gods. ² When Paul reminded the Philippians that there is a "name above every name", and that "Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2: 9-11), he was calling them to a confession that would clash head-on with Emperor worship and in a year or two would provoke the first of the great Roman persecutions. ^{Religious freedom would vanish for 250 years.}

1. S. Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, p. 32; and D. A. Hays, Paul and His Epistles, p. 410

2. S. Dill, op. cit. p.617

But above all, like ours, it was an age when life too easily lost its meaning and man too easily gave up hope. ^{This is what happens when real freedom disappears.} The frantic vices of the Empire were ~~only~~ ^{but} a vain search for happiness when real hope of happiness had died, a kind of Roman existentialism.

The best philosopher of the age was Seneca. He was a Roman millionaire who could lie on a purple couch under golden ceilings and murmur in strange despair that life is living death, "a fatal gift of which the best that can be said is that the torture is short."

In the same city, Rome, was a Jewish prisoner in chains. The sad and suave philosopher and the fiery little Jew probably never met. The social contacts of a prisoner in Rome are limited. ^{but} when Paul wrote to Philippi, out of that prison cell came a trumpet call of Christian joy that is the best answer ever written to Seneca's unhappy gospel of universal pessimism.

Philippians tells how a prisoner in jail, if he is ^{free and} ~~in~~, can be ^{happier} than the wisest and richest philosopher in the greatest city on earth. ^{Part 4 - the secret of Paul's joy was that even in prison he was a man with} The Happy Prisoner. No one seriously doubts that Paul was the

author of this letter. About a hundred years ago it was fashionable for a time, particularly in Germany, to attack the genuineness of the letter on the ground that it is too gentle and kind to be a letter of the thundering Paul. Modern scholarship, however, has discredited this line of criticism. As one recent commentator puts it, "This is a bit like saying that the Churchill who delivered warlike speeches about Hitler could not have written friendly letters to Roosevelt... If this letter was not written by Paul, nothing was." ⁴

a man with a mission - I tell the whole world about S.V. It was at Philippi that he came as the first missionary to the West. (L. J. 6) ~~the world~~ ~~lost~~ ~~the~~ ~~truth~~ ~~its~~

~~freedom with the truth that would make men free. He was in prison but what he wrote there was from~~

3. Quoted in S. Dill, p. 14
4. C. E. Sincow, They Met at Philippi, Oxford, 1958, p. 21. For a discussion of the rise and fall of the critics' attack, see H. R. Vincent, Philippians (The International Critical Commentary), pp. xxv. ff.

was reaching the edge of Rome itself, and Rome was the gateway to the whole world. It is in this global sense that Paul can describe the church in Philippi as "the beginning of the gospel". (Phil. 4:15)

Philippi was ^{indeed} strategically located for mission in the world of that day. The main arterial highway, the Egnatian Way, between Asia and Rome was guarded at the edge of Europe by the forts of Philippi. So when Christianity entered Western history from Asia, it came with Paul through Philippi.

** I have seen in Western newspapers reports that they are "Western religion". The Communists, of course, like to make us think so*

(One of the most overworked myths of our time is) that Western imperialism invaded the Orient through the Christian missionary movement. Philippians reminds us that this is all wrong. The first missionary went the other way. The gospel did not "invade" Asia; it came from Asia, and its first beach-head in the European West, so far as we have any record, was at Philippi. Furthermore, in the communist myth, the missionary is the aggressor. In Philippi he is in prison; and he is in prison again when he writes to the Philippians. In the communist myth the missionary buys his converts with capitalist gold. In Philippi, again, it is just the other way around. It is the converts who are paying the missionary. The whole letter to Philippians is really just a thank-you note for their gifts. In the communist myth, the missionary is an imperialist; in Philippi, the missionary is of a conquered race, and it is ^{his} converts who are the imperialists. Curiously enough, even the little church there is born with an imperialist tinge in the house of Lydia, a seller of the imperial purple. As for the missionary, he was just a laborer, a maker of tents.

Look back then and imagine the apostle, the pioneer to Europe, as he steps ashore at the port of Neapolis. The account is in Acts 16, where the narrative suddenly shifts to the first person, indicating that

In the communist myth, again, the missionary is an imperialist; but in Philippi, the missionary is of a conquered race, the Jews, and it is his converts who are the imperialists. They are Romans. Curiously enough, even the little church there is born with an imperialist tinge in the house of Lydia, a seller of the imperial purple. As for the missionary, Paul, he was just a

laborer, apparently, a maker of tents. *In the Communist myth, Christianity is an quartershly man of freedom, but Paul came to a world that was losing its freedom, and the faith he preached was the truth that sets us free. In Philippi's case, in the word as it really is, the faith came up.*

But while we are speaking of communist myths; let us remember that we Christians sometimes develop some myths and misunderstandings of our own. One of them is the myth that churches cannot be destroyed; that however fierce their persecutors may be, God's promise stands firm, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against them". That promise is true, but it must not be interpreted naively and unbiblically. It is a misunderstanding both of God's promise and of Paul's confidence to imagine that any church anywhere is indestructible.

Where is the church in Philippi today? Ten feet underground! I have seen pictures of the plain of Philippi: tumbling wall, a heap of stones where archaeologists have scratched away the dust of centuries, a column standing bare and broken against a line of snowy hills. That is all. There is no church left.

And where is the church in North Korea today. I have talked to some who have escaped south into freedom. "Are there any churches left in Pyengyang?" I ask. For I can remember when it was a city of churches, a Christian city. But the answer comes, "No, there are no churches left in Pyengyang."

God's promise is to the whole church, not to individual churches, like Philippi. Like the sign of Noah's rainbow, though it stands as assurance against total disaster, it is no guarantee of local immunity. There have been many floods since Noah's day, local floods; and many churches have been wiped out since our Lord made his promise to his church. It happened to Philippi; and it can happen again, as in North Korea.

Was the apostle's confidence, then, nothing but wishful thinking, ~~when he spoke of~~

Philippians - 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 6

when he told ~~them~~ the Philippians so boldly in chapter 1, verses 6, and 10-11, that "He who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion"? Not at all. His confidence is in the One who began the good work, in Jesus Christ, not in those in whom the work is done. He loves the Philippians, but he knows better than to put all his hopes for the future in any man. The future belongs to God.

The Church in Philippi is gone today, to be sure, but the church of God has circled the whole world. *Truth* freedom does disappear, at times, but truth "crushed to earth shall rise again, and make men free."

~~And~~ I do not believe we have heard the last of the church in North Korea. ^{tell you a} May I ~~close with this~~ story of the Korean War. When the war broke out, my brother, who is superintendent of the Tong San Presbyterian Hospital in Taegu, was caught up, as a Reserve Officer, in the Fifth Air Force. After the landings at Inchon, and the push north with MacArthur, as the UN forces began to close in on the communist capital of Pyengyang, my brother was asked to fly north on a special mission. His plane landed him at the Pyengyang airport, on the south side of the Taidong River, but there he was told he could not yet go into the city on the north side of the river, because there was fighting in the streets, and besides, the bridge was out. But he was impatient. He had been born in Pyengyang, and knew that part of the country far better than the colonel who had told him he could not go across the river. When we were boys we used to go swimming near the airport. He remembered that there used to be a ferry about half a mile north of the airport, so leaving his baggage, he walked down to the river, and then upstream. But of course the ferry was no longer in operation. However, he found that at that point the Army had thrown a pontoon bridge across the Taidon, and against his better judgment he walked across, then began to walk slowly downstream toward the city on the other side.

As he was approaching the outskirts of the city, he met a Korean, and asked him a very foolish question. He said, "Are you a Christian?" My brother should have known that the communists had completely wiped out the Christian church in North Korea. But the man answered, "Yes, I am a Christian." And

then he asked my brother a foolish question. Imagine thinking that the first American soldier in uniform he met would know the Korean name of a missionary who had been dead for fifteen years. But that is the question he asked. "Do you know Ma Moksa?", he said. And my brother said, "Yes, I know Ma Moksa. He is my father." And at that the Korean turned and began to run back toward the city calling out, "The Christians are coming", and people began to tumble out of their houses with joy. When my brother finally came into Pyengyang, he ~~said~~ says, it was the nearest thing to a triumphal entry he ever expects to have in his life, except ~~that~~ that people were weeping, and he was not ashamed to weep with them. For he had come home. And ~~more~~ more ~~than~~ than that; he had come home to find the Church of Jesus Christ still alive in North Korea in spite of everything that the communists had been able to throw at it for five long terrible years of persecution.

It is true, "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it". And Paul was right to be confident. The church ^{and its freedoms} may vanish for a while here and there. But it cannot be destroyed. And I am confident that it can be said of the church of North Korea, as was said of the church in Philippi, that "He who began a good work in you, will bring it to completion." For the future belongs to God, and ~~not~~ not to the communists.

As for the church in Philippi, too, as a historian I like to think that that first church in Europe did not disappear entirely, at least, not without first playing its part in Christian mission and in Christian victory. Origen, writing about one hundred and fifty years after Paul's death, says that the Clement mentioned in Philippians 4:3 (where Paul speaks of "Clement and the rest of my fellow-workers") is Clement of Rome who was one of the first of the "church fathers". This may well not be the case, for Clement was a common name and we have only Origen's word for the identification, five generations after the fact. But I like to think that Origen may have been right, and that the little church in Philippi, first fruit of Paul's mission to Europe, took its partnership with him in that world mission so seriously that when at last the great apostle laid down his life a martyr for the gospel in Rome, his beloved Philippians sent from their small number a missionary to take his place. I like to think that that missionary from Philippi to Rome was Clement, Paul's fellow-worker in Philippi, a man so able that he later became bishop of Rome, and the writer of the earliest Christian document known outside the New Testament, that is, Clement's Letter to the Corinthians.

If that is true, what a fitting answer it was to Paul's confidence that "he who has begun a good work in you", as he says in chapter 1, verse 6, "will bring it to completion", and what a wonderful answer to his prayer, in verse 9, "that your love may abound...filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Christ, to the glory and praise of God".

Now let me say a word about the structure and outline of this wonderful letter of the Apostle Paul to his church in Philippi.

Philippians - 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9

For anyone who likes neat outlines constructed around a central, unifying theme, Philippians is going to be a disappointment. It is not an orderly, logical essay like Romans, or Hebrews. It is not biography, like the gospels; or history, like the Acts. Philippians is pure letter, warm, personal, repetitious, and, like some sermons I have heard, twice as long as it starts out to be. Paul finishes his letter, apparently in chapter two (as we divide it), for there he writes, "Finally.." at the beginning of chapter 3 as if he was all through with the letter, but then he goes on writing for two more chapters. He writes seven verses in chapter 4, says "Finally.." again and goes on for twice as many more verses. Even after he has said "Amen" in chapter 4 verse 20, he cannot stop, but adds a three-verse postscript.

Analytically, the letter divides into six main sections:

1. Greetings, and a prayer for the Philippians, to whom he is writing. (1:1-11)
2. Then the subject shifts to Paul's situation in Rome (1: 12-26)
3. But at the end of chapter 1, Paul's thought turns back to Philippi with an appeal for Christian unity (1:27 to 2:18)
4. Again his attention turns to his own situation, and he tells of his future plans (2: 19-30)
5. But he is still concerned about the church in Philippi, and in chapter 3 turns once again to his ~~RELATIONS~~ Philippian friends with warnings and appeals (3:1 to 4:8).
6. And the letter finally ends with a personal word of thanks for the gift which the church in Philippi had sent to him in Rome (4:9-23)

But if you will read through the letter looking for that which is uppermost on the apostle's heart as he writes, the whole letter falls into place around two main themes: joy, and unity.

Philippians - 10 10 10 10 10 10 10

Each of these themes has its key verse. For JOY, the verse is chapter 4, verse 4: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice". And for unity the verse is chapter 2, verse 2: "Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind".

With these two major themes in mind, the letter can be outlined in six main sections as follows:

1. The Joys of Partnership (1:1-11)
2. The Joys of Adversity (1:12-30)
3. The Joys of Unity (2; 1-11)
4. The Pursuit of Unity (2:12-30)
5. Warnings against Three Threats to Unity (ch. 3)
6. Final Appeals for Joy and Unity in Christ (4:1-23) //

As you read this letter, think of the Apostle Paul, the writer. No one seriously doubts any more that Paul was the author. About a hundred years ago it was fashionable for a time, particularly in Germany, to attack the genuineness of the letter on the ground that it is too gentle and kind to be a letter of the thundering Apostle Paul. Modern scholarship, however, has discredited this line of criticism. As one recent commentator, Carroll Simcox, has put it, "This is a bit like saying that the Churchill who delivered warlike speeches about Hitler could not have written friendly letters to Roosevelt... If this letter was not written by Paul, nothing was."

And think of Paul writing in prison. Note how the letter simply does not sound like the letter of a man in prison. It is too full of joy. Look at his prayer, particularly chapter 1, verses 7 to 9. We would expect a man in prison to be praying to get out, but not Paul. His prayer is filled not with the anxieties of the moment but with blessings. Where we would pray, "Help, Lord, I have problems," Paul

Philippians - 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11

prays, "Thank you, Lord, I have so many people who are dear to me."

"God is my witness," he says, "how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus." (vs. 8). *Freedom begins not with outward circumstances, ~~with~~ but with the joy of Jesus Christ in the heart.*

~~we~~ look again in the next section of the letter, verses 12 to 30, how his joy seems to increase as his situation gets worse and worse. The Philippians had been so worried about him, when they heard of his arrest, that they had sent one of their church members, Epaphroditus, to see what could be done about his desperate position. But Paul turns the tables on them. Epaphroditus had come to comfort him; now Paul sends him back with this letter to comfort them. (Read Phil. 2: 25-30). It seems that they are far more anxious than he is. He is in prison, but he is deliriously happy. He uses the word "joy" or "rejoice" over and over again all through this short letter.

You might almost think he was out of his mind. Anyone can rejoice in friendship ^{and freedom} and love and a chance to work; it is quite another thing to rejoice ^{in prison,} in adversity; but this is exactly what Paul is doing. He says, first, (in verses 15-18), that he rejoices about the situation he faces in Rome. But he is under lock and key, and outside his cell in the city of Rome the church has split into two sections, with rival evangelists preaching only to cause Paul more trouble. "So I rejoice," he says. It seems absurd.

Second, (in verses 19-26), he rejoices at the prospect of deliverance from prison. This would make more sense, except that the odds were already turning hopelessly against him. It is impossible to know the exact date that Paul wrote this passage, but it was probably about the time of the death of Burrhus, commander of the Emperor's personal bodyguard, the Praetorian guard. Burrhus was the last good commander of the guard under Nero. It was probably Burrhus who up to now had been responsible for Paul's rather lenient treatment, all *in all*

Philippians - 12 12 12 12 12 12 12 12

him visitors, and the freedom to write letters. But when Burrhus died a tiger took his place, the hated Tigellinus, debaucher of the Emperor's own sisters and the worst of Nero's creatures. So with Burrhus dead, Paul's best chances of freedom were already gone. But he wrote, "I shall rejoice".

Joy under such circumstances was madness. But Paul was not "under the circumstances". He was "in Christ"--that is the key phrase of the letter--and when life closes in, as Paul now explains to the Philippians, the difference between despair and hope is Christ. *For in Christ he is free. Not even a prison can take away that land of freedom.*

Perhaps his mind goes back ten years, to the time when he first visited Philippi, and was arrested, and put in the city jail. Yes, he remembers that there was that prison in Philippi, so much like the prison in which he now languishes in Rome. They had tried to keep him prisoner there, but he had refused to act like a prisoner. He had refused to recognize defeat. He sang songs in the night. And after the hymns, and after the earthquake, it was the prison-keeper, not the prisoner who saw himself defeated and tried to commit suicide; and it was the prisoner, not the prison-keeper, who opened the doors--the doors ^{to freedom and} to eternal life to all who would believe and be saved.

This is the message of this part of the Epistle to the Philippians. *No power in the world can rob the Christian of his freedom in Christ;* ~~There is no defeat for the Christian;~~ for Christ has *overcome the world.* ~~won the victory.~~ "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice". "The truth has made you free"

3. Paul

Let's look at Paul, in closing in terms of ~~the Paul's~~
Paul Tournier's 5 necessary ingredients of mission is to remain an
adventure ~~for Christ~~, not a frustration. What I said last night was
heavy on psychology - for Tournier is a psychologist - but is it true
to Scripture? If you doubt it, listen to Paul.

① Ephesians 3: 8 and 12: "To me, tho I am less than the least
of all God's people, he has granted of his grace the privilege of
proclaiming to the Gentiles the good news of the unfathomable
riches of Christ... I beg you, then, not to lose heart over ~~of~~
my sufferings; indeed, they are your glory." There's the glory
of the adventure of mission - not the glory of the missionary,
but the glory of God's work through the missionaries in the lives
of those they reach.

② But there is another side, - the suffering and the hardship
of the adventure. Listen again to Paul, in II Cor. 11: 24-25: -
"Five times the Jews have given me the 39 strokes; three times
I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times
I have been shipwrecked" That's enough adventure for anyone -
and enough pain. But there are no regrets in the mind of
Paul.

③ Listen to him a third time - Romans 8: 31. "If God be for
us who can be against us." However great may be the hardships,
and the very real possibilities of complete, personal failure in
the mission, Paul knows that the end will never be failure,
but victory. "God [is] for us; so who can be against us."

There is glory; there is hardship and there is victory, for Paul and
for us all in this adventure we call our Christian mission. Recast these

three points, and make them five — and in the life and mission of Paul, Tournier is justified and his lessons in mission psychology as we noted them last night, are as Biblical as the life of greatest of all the apostolic missionaries.

I.

1. The first indispensable ingredient is opportunity for self-expression. Read Paul's letters some time with this point in view, and you'll be surprised how self-expression, this first mark of adventure, is so refreshingly obvious in Paul. He can't keep himself out of his letters. He's almost always jumping to his feet, as it were, and interrupting the even, theological flow of his writing with a work of personal testimony. Quite unPresbyterian, but very Biblical. Look at Galatians. He spends the whole first two chapters talking about himself. At one point, toward the end of the letter, he even holds himself up as a model — "Brethren, I beseech you become like me." ^(Gal. 4:12) But before that, he's already stopped and checked himself, almost as if preaching to himself: Wait a minute, Paul. I've been crucified. It is no longer I that live; it is Christ. (Gal. 2:20).

I repeat, self-expression doesn't disappear in the life of the ~~a Biblical~~ missionary. Not in the Bible. Tournier was right. That would be death. But one important point must be added. Though self-expression is right and proper, ultimately Christian self-expression must lead beyond self to Christ. Only then is the Son really living. It is no longer I who live, it is Christ who lives in me.

II. The second "indispensable ingredient" in this adventure which is our Christian mission is innovation, creativity. Remember that missionary doctor who was ready to tuck into anything, barbering, plumbing, and even identifying the bones of R.C. saints, ~~as a~~ ~~kind of~~ ~~numerical~~ ~~Paul~~. So also Paul, always innovating, inventing, shockingly creative. There was no locking of Paul into one small pattern, ^{he was always inventing a new one.} He was a pesky, plaguing missionary, ~~always~~ never afraid to stand up and argue with his superiors in the religious hierarchy - first, ^{as a young Pharisee, shaking headquarters} ~~the Pharisees~~, with his greatest, most innovative move of all - becoming a Christian; then, ^{upsetting} Peter and the apostles with his radical ~~new mission~~ departure from ~~mission~~ ^{the} ~~the old missionary mission~~ to a ^{new one} ~~pattern~~ - a mission to Gentiles, even. "I am become all things to all men, that by all means I might save some" (I Cor. 9:22).

III. And of the third "indispensable ingredient" is the pursuit of a single final goal, who said it better than Paul to the Philippians (3:13): "This one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, ^{and straining forward to what lies ahead,} ~~and pressing~~ ^{press} on toward the goal for the prize of the high call of God in Jesus Christ." That high calling, he tells us, in the same passage, is very clear, "that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ"... (3:8b-9). And here, as a missionary, thinking not only of himself, but for of his little missionary outpost, his first preaching station in Europe, he adds "Brethren, join in imitating me..." Imitating him only in that he "counted everything but loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." His one, great goal was to win ~~at~~ everyone he could ~~win~~ reach with the good news of ~~so~~ Jesus Christ. Remember Dr. Hall of Korea: "We have only one aim, the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

IV. But remember Dr. Hall also in connection with the fourth indispensable ingredient: LOVE. "He never spoke our language," said a Korean at his funeral, but he loved some of us into the kingdom of heaven...."

Paul said it better: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love; ... and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so as to remove mountains, ... and though I give away all I have, and my body to be burned, but have not love, I am nothing."

V. After that, Turner's final point - running a mile - is an anticlimax. That's why, with Paul, I began with it - 5 times the lashes, 3 times the ~~stomping~~ beating with rods, the stoning, the shipwrecks - danger from mines, danger from robbers, dangers from his own people and from the gentiles, dangers in the city, the wilderness, the sea, danger from false brethren. ^{That's nothing to boast about.} ~~In some measure~~ - We're all missionaries here - and ^{in some measure, some more, some less} that's par for the course; ^{isn't it?} ^{yet} And like Paul, we're ready to add it all up, the bad with the good, and say, "It was worth it." I heard you, yesterday afternoon. It's what the Bible expects of missionaries. "For the sake of Christ," says Paul, "I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (II Cor. 12:10).

ADVENTURE FOR CHRIST

I. ~~The Hard Side~~ It was from ~~two~~ Pauls + two Samuels that I think I ~~is~~ best - yellow #1.

OR

I. This morning I want to talk about Christian Mimi as adventure. - #1. white
Phl 3:8-14

- #2 (4) "
- #3 (6)
- 4 4.4 (7)
- 5 5 5 (8)
- 6 6 6 (9)
- 7 7 7 (10)
- (11) (12)

II. Adventure Today, 7 I Cr. 3. 5-11.

- #1 white
- #2 "
- #3
- 3-3-3 [8-8-8]
- 4, 5

III. Missionary as Pioneer - Phl. p. 4
Korean cl. & ?

IV. Missionary as Pastor - Phl. p. 9.

St. Paul. Mission As Adventure

How did St. Paul view his mission -

- ① Travel + exploration: Acts 21: 1-5a (Smyrna, Co, Rhodes, Patara, Phoenice by way of Cyprus, Syria (150))
- ② Call Acts 16.9
- ③ Command. "Set apart Barnabas + Saul". - Acts 13: 1-3.
- ④ ~~Old~~ Duty. [I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. Acts 26.12-16.19.]
- ⑤ ~~Not sacrifice~~ → Romans 1. 14-15.
- ⑥ Not sacrifice. "I have learned, in whatever state I am, - to be content." Phil. 4. 11.
- ⑦ Challenge. "I press on..." Phil 3. 12-14.

MISSION ADVENTURE (1)

We have three sessions together today: - Mission as an Adventure - There are more familiar ways of thinking of mission:

- ① Journey Acts 21:1-5a
- ② Call (Adv. 10:9)
- ③ Command Acts 13:13
- ④ Duty Rom 1:14-15
- ⑤ Missionary Society? No. (Phil. 4:11)
- ⑥ Missionary Challenge. (Phil 3:12-14)

~~I in fact see -~~

All three aspects of missionary life and work are true and exceedingly important - but if there is one thing I have learned from my own experience in China & Korea - and from my father's life in Korea before me - it is this: Mission for Jesus Christ is always an adventure - a wonderful ^{often frustrating, sometimes dull, sometimes} - but always an ^{adventure} adventure. It was to Paul - and it can be to us: -

Listen to Paul speaking in his mission, his great adventure: -

(A)

I 2nd Cor. 3:8-12. "To me, tho I am the very least -" The glory of the adventure

(B)

But it's not easy - there is challenge, risk + hardship. The hardships of adventure

II 2nd Cor 11:24-28. "Five times I have received the 40 lashes

But however great the hardships; & the real possibilities of your failure -

(C)

when the adventure is undertaken with Christ - the end is never failure, but victory the victory of adventure

III Romans 8:31: if God is for us, who is against us?

8:35, 37-39.

The victory in adventure

① The glory of adventure ② The hardships of adventure ③ The victory

That's a 3-point outline for Presbyterians who can't remember more than 3 things at a time. But for you more intelligent ^{non Presbyt.} [Baptists] I have 5 points. When I began to think of missions in terms of adventure, I knew it couldn't mean adventure in the ordinary romantic sense - a passing thrill, a cheap achievement. Adventure for Christ is more than that. And I found in a book by Swiss psychologist, a devout Christian - an analysis of adventure in psychological and Christian terms that fits the Biblical pattern.

Adventure, he says, is the basic instinct of human behavior. Planted by God. It's the way He made us. We need that sense of adventure in our work - or we lose meaning.

MISSIONS & ADVENTURE

The first evening I looked into the future and saw a place
- all there for the missionary in Asia. Yesterday I looked far back
into the past and the missionary was there too, - a child in Asia
though we too often forget it

Today I want to look at the age of adventure in missions.
The 19th what Latham calls "The Great Century"

Now I have often been warned against the lure of adventure
as a motive for missions. Don't go to the field for the romance & I
don't go unless you're called. And that's true. But there's a good deal
to be said for adventure. It's better than frustration and

the 19th was the age of adventure in mission, - that's bad - ^{too bad;} the 20th
the age of frustration in mission, and that's worse

Look at Paul. Take the sense of adventure out of his mission. and
you no longer have the real Paul.

Mission as Adventure I.

This morning I want to talk about the Christian ^{discipleship} mission ^{in the age of adventure - the 19th c.} as an adventure. I know there are more familiar ways to think about it. We can think of it as a journey: I was brought up on Sunday School maps of Paul's missionary journeys. Or vocationally we think of it as a call. A duty, perhaps: obedience to the Great Commission. Some people think of it as a sacrifice. I don't. I think of it as a challenge and an adventure. If there is one thing I have learned from my own experiences in China and Korea, and from my father's life in Korea before me, it is this: Mission for Jesus Christ is always an adventure, a wonderful adventure.

Now I have often been warned against the line of adventure - a mission for... Don't put it down on your candidate paper... Don't go in the world for the account of the... called. All that... But there... that can be said for... a... the Biblical... I find...

It is ^{of course it is better to start with God's Word than with your own experience.} Biblical, too, I hasten to add. Listen to Paul rejoicing in his mission, ^{his} great adventure. Ephesians 3: 8, 12. "To me, who am less than the least of all God's people, he has granted of his grace the privilege of proclaiming to the Gentiles the good news of the unfathomable riches of Christ... I beg you, then, not to lose heart over my sufferings for you; indeed, they are your glory." ^{of mission} That's the grace and glory of the adventure. ^{his mission, I find the same} But there is ^{the} other side; the suffering, and the hardship of the adventure. II Cor. 11:24-25. "Five times the Jews have given me the 39 strokes; three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I have been shipwrecked." But however great the hardship, and the very real possibilities of personal failure, when the adventure is undertaken with Christ, the end is never failure, but victory. Romans 8:31. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

There's ^{there} the glory, ^{there} the hardships, ^{there's} the victory in this adventure we call our Christian mission: That's a 3-point outline for Presbyterians who can't remember more than three points at a time. But for you more intelligent people from other missions I have five points. *When I began to think of missions in terms of adventure, I knew it could not mean adventure in the ordinary, romantic sense--a passing thrill, a cheap achievement. Adventure ~~is~~ for Christ must be more than that. And I found in a book by a Swiss psychologist who is also a wise and earnest Christian an analysis of adventure in psychological and Christian terms that fits the Biblical pattern.

Adventure, he says is the basic instinct of human behaviour. It is planted in us by God. It is the way He made us, and we need a sense of adventure in our work or we lose our interest in it and our zest for it.

The psychologist is Paul Tournier. In his book, The Adventure of Living, he says that in your life and work you must find five elements that make life an adventure. Without these five necessary ingredients even if you are a missionary your life can fizzle down into purposelessness and disillusion. These are the five ingredients:

- 1. Opportunity for self-expression
- 2. Opportunity for innovation and creativity.
- 3. Pursuit of single, coherent goal.
- 4. The sustaining power of love.
- 5. The running of a risk.

Keep these five factors operative in your ^{Christian} life, says Tournier, and life is an adventure - a meaningful, purposeful adventure for ^A Christ.

see hand no. 1

But I have been talking about the past. In another session I want to bring the story up out of the golden past into our gray and uncertain present. I want to ask you "Has this sense of adventure gone out of your mission for Christ today?"

But for now, think again of the glories of the past, of the pioneers who were before you, and into whose labors you have entered. They found in their work the five indispensable ingredients of Christian adventure — and they gave us the miracle of modern missions, ("the great Century")

1. They found scope for true self-expression. They were somebody, because they were in Christ. They turned hard-watching into the gospel for the world.
2. They had the ability to minimize and unmet. A course there were problems, but they found solutions. They were tent-makers, like Paul, doctors, warriors, engineers of spiritual medicine.
3. They had a purpose — a single final goal. Christ for the world, and the world for Christ. The whole world was the tip of the world Napoleon.
4. They never lost the sense and power of God's love. Love for them, and for the lost.
5. They took the risk. Grenfell of Labrador, said "If I am ever faced with 2 choices in a course of action, I always choose the most adventurous."

And they found the victory. Paul the missionary said it for all of them. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Thank God for the pioneers.

Doing a Sea of Cortez
We're always doing 5 weeks long - 4 days with
R.C. but Colm married then -

Mission as an Adventure

(Intro: First of all I want to deny firmly and categorically the rumor that someone is sure to start, that I chose this book (Tournier's The Adventure of Living) for your study, because I thought that you Canadians needed psychiatric help.) I suggested it ^{only} partly because it was written by a physician-psychiatrist and I know nothing about psychology and was therefore irresistibly attracted by it; but more, because In Tournier's ^{S. field} analysis of the pattern of adventure--this basic instinct of human behaviour (as he calls it)--I sensed a parallel pattern to the history of ^{readily} Christian mission. His description of the "abrupt, spell-binding ascent" to adventure and achievement, followed by the long, frustrating descent into organization and the exhaustion of ^{followed by my reading of Tournier's} "adventure," helped me to understand and adjust to the rhythm of achievement and frustration in my own missionary life. ^(Gracell) If ever I am faced with 2 choices in a course of action I always choose the more adventurous.

1. Self-expression
2. Adventure
3. Simple goal
4. Goal in time
5. Involves a risk

In our (two) sessions together, I want first to look back into the golden age, the first stage of mission, the thrilling ascent into adventure. I want to ask how our predecessors in Korea, the pioneers, found adventure and satisfaction in their mission. What was the secret of their sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. Then tomorrow, we will compare our own gray age with theirs and seek for hints as to how to overcome our frustrations and recapture the adventure.

^{Remember} Today, let us look at the time when there was ~~not~~ no question about the thrill of adventure ^{in mission} on the mission field. The "last of the heroisms", Phillips Brooks called it. And ^(and) Pearl Buck, remembering her own father, wrote, "The early missionaries were born warriors and very great men, for in those days religion was still a banner under which to fight. No weak or timid soul could sail to foreign lands and defy death and danger unless he did carry religion as his banner under which even death would be a glorious end. To go forth, to cry out, to warn, to save others, these were frightful urgencies upon the soul already saved. There was a very madness of necessity, an agony of salvation."

^{thunder} Listen to the ^{speaking} ring of adventure (in the cry of) Chalmers of New Guinea, (as he neared the end of his career:) "Recall the twenty-one years, give me back all its experiences, give me its shipwrecks, its standings in the face of death, give it me surrounded with spears and clubs, give it me back again with spears flying around me, with the club knocking me to the ground, give it me back (I say) and I will still be your missionary."

Those were the days when the call to mission was like the sound of a trumpet. "The Evangelization of the World in

Even the theologians -

Our Generation" ~~was the cry.~~ "Christianity sets out for victory," ~~This~~ ^{was} ~~said the theologians (like Wm. Newton Clarke).~~ "The intention is to conquer is characteristic of the gospel... It cannot conquer except in love, but in love it intends to conquer. It means to fill the world."

g knees

Listen to how Appenzeller's biographer describes him: "a knightly soldier, 'valiant from spur to plume', a warrior of God... he came into the mysterious secrecy of an inhospitable hermit kingdom, the abode of..darkness, ignorance, and disease.. like an ~~invincible~~ invincible sunbeam. Bold as a lion..afame with zeal--traveller, explorer, teacher, organizer, evangelist.. cool-headed, warm-hearted, hot with zeal..." I don't know how it strikes you, but that purple prose makes me feel drab and pallid by comparison; ~~nevertheless those phrases catch something of the excitement and adventure that it was to be a missionary eighty years ago in Korea.~~ *And Tannier helps me to understand just what gave them that sense of adventure*

There was

Just getting to Seoul after the landing at Inchon was an adventure. Appenzeller and Underwood's first breakfast was at a little old Japanese hotel in Chemulpo (Inchon) where they waited and waited for the meal until an apologetic table boy came ~~in~~ in to explain that one of the guests was still using the table-cloth for a sheet, and that they would have to wait until he got up.

Crabbe's letter

Later (1895) the first Southern Methodists, Bp. Hendrix and C. F. Reid, feared that the little river steamer from Inchon to Seoul would never make it. The thing puffed away for seven solid hours, then ran right into a mud-bank. "We'll have to wait for high tide," said the captain. "How long will that be?" they asked. "About eight hours." "How far is it to Seoul?" asked the two pioneers. "Six ~~hours~~ miles," someone said. "Then we'll walk." But it turned out to be a long twenty miles, and it was one o'clock in the morning when the two finally wearily limped into the capital. At that they were more fortunate than the first Southern Presbyterian woman to come to Seoul, a few years earlier. The old curfew was still in effect, and by the time she had come up river the city gates were closed. Friends inside the city had to throw a rope down over the city wall and haul her up ignominiously inside.

it

But ~~xxxx~~ was more than the romance of physical adventure that gave those pioneers their thrill, their sense of excitement and adventure and accomplishment in mission. In trying to analyze just what it was that gave them satisfaction, rather than frustration, in their work, I found Tournier's five-fold definition of the characteristics of adventure most helpful. Remember that the "adventure" of which he speaks is "the driving force behind human action" that gives significance to human effort. And these are its five most important characteristics: (see p. 85):

1. Adventure is a manifestation of oneself, a form of self-expression.
2. It innovates and invents; it is ingenious.
3. It is coherent, evolving in the pursuit of a single final goal.
4. This goal is love; it is love which suggests the goal, and love which directs and sustains the adventure.
5. Lastly, it involves necessarily the running of a risk."

How neatly this definition fits the spirit and work of Christian mission in the days of the pioneers.

The first characteristic is

I. Self-expression. "Life without adventure," says Tournier, "is life without living," and the first mark of adventure is that it is "a manifestation of oneself, a form of self-expression." It fulfills the vital need of ~~creative action~~, of "putting to fruitful use the talents one has been endowed with."

~~The communist missionary complaint of today is "that we don't have it. And if you don't have it you're dead," says the psychologist.~~

~~If that is so, then life for the pioneers was an adventure indeed.~~ How those old war-horses, the first missionaries, chafed at routine, non-creative work! When my father came to Korea in 1890 Protestant work was just five years old, but they had already started an orphanage. They didn't quite know what to do with the orphans, however, After you had preached to them on Sunday, like a good missionary, what else did you do? So they told father, the newest arrival, "Teach them." And they told him what to teach,--arithmetic, Geography, English--the course was all set. But after a few months of teaching those ragged Korean orphans American geography, of all things, as the course prescribed, he stormed into a mission meeting one day and said, "The Lord did not call me to Korea to teach the Koreans to bound the state of North Carolina," and he left Seoul for the great adventure of his life, moving into the forbidden interior to open up North Korea for Christ.

There he found the creative action he longed for, the freedom of self-expression he needed. Room to move around in. A whole half-country to be won for Jesus Christ.

p. 34 →

Tournier speaks of this aspect of adventure as "the fruitful use of talents one has been endowed with." But it is more than prideful self-expression. It is putting those talents at Christ's service. There is an element of proper Christian humility, too, in that kind of self-expression.

For example, Malcolm Fenwick, a Canadian (one of the famous Toronto quartet: Gale, Fenwick, Hardie and Avison), was ~~for years~~ the first and for years the only Baptist in Korea. He was a rugged independent--"Fireblower" was Gale's name for him in The Vanguard, "kind-hearted but heady, and set on one thing..namely, his own way...but he prayed and studied his Bible and lived a lonely, self-sacrificing kind of life. A strange creature was Fireblower." (p. 134 f.) His call to adventure in Korea was a strangely moving one, as he describes it in his book, The Church of Christ in Korea (p. 13 f.) He was a sales-

3-8 Mar 1951
18

III. The Servant Lord

2 By Samuel H. McHaff
(1:27-2:18; 3:1-21)

The first paradox around which this epistle revolves is that of the unequal partners; the second is that of the strangely happy prisoner. The third is the most important of all, ~~it is~~ the paradox of the Servant Lord. Here is the heart and key of the whole letter, beginning with chapter 2, especially verses 5-11. If, for example, as we did Saturday, we take as the contral mood of the epistle, joy, we will find in Philippians that Christian joy is joy only in Christ, the Servant Lord. Of if, as we shall do today, we say that the theme of the epistle is unity, we will find that the Christian unity of which Paul speaks is unity only in Christ, and that its secret is "the mind of Christ", the Lord of Glory "who took on him the form of a servant."

Of these two notes characterizing the epistle--joyful reassurance in times of difficulty, and exhortation to unity--the passages we study today (1:27-2:18; 3:1-21) are in the direct line of the latter, for the all-inclusive theme is still, "Paul Calls the Church to Mission and to Unity".

Pursuing that theme, and moving on step by step artlessly and naturally, Paul leads us into the depths of the riches of one of the greatest theological passages in the Bible. This is the order of his thought:

1. Be united. (1:27-2:2)
2. Be humble. (2: 3,4)
3. Be in Christ. (2: 5-11)

The first emphasis is on unity--an old, familiar missionary emphasis. I was complaining the other day about the historical contradiction in "mission and unity", for mission so often proceeds out of disunity, and sometimes union ends mission. True, there is that continuing tension in the expansion of Christianity, but the history of the modern missionary movement is itself proof of a deep and necessary interconnection between mission and unity, for mission is basically discontent with disunity and it is from the mission field that the most urgent demands for unity have come, so that in the end, unity has proceeded out of mission.

We do not need to seek far for the reason. It is the evangelistic imperative on the mission field that raises the cry for unity and cooperation. Bishop Azariah the saintly evangelist of South India and the first Indian ever to become an Anglican bishop, tells of an interview he had with Dr. Ambedkar, leader of India's untouchable millions, the harijans, the outcastes. It was back in 1935. Dr. Ambedkar was about to forsake Hinduism. "Hinduism is not a religion; it is a disease," he said. Would he bring his millions into the Christian faith? "Your people, deeply religious, cannot live without a religion," said Bishop Azariah. "It is not enough to give up Hinduism. They must have something else." And he

offered them Christianity. Dr. Ambedkar replied, "I am well aware of all that the Christian Church has done for the outcastes... But we Harijans are one community all over India, and our strength is in our unity. Can you in the Christian Church offer us any unity comparable to that?" And the bishop was silent. *Since 1957 - 2,000,000 Harijans have turned Buddhist.*

That is the evangelistic imperative. In South India, Disunity, was a sin, turning countless millions away from salvation in Christ. As a matter of fact, it was only the recognition of this fact that persuaded the Anglicans to enter into the discussions there that led to the formation of the Church of South India. It was the Christian mission itself that demanded the unity.]

So it is no accident that Paul the missionary writes to Philippi pleading for unity. Just what it was in Philippi that called forth the appeal, we can only conjecture. Perhaps it was the personal quarrel between Euodia and Syntyche which 4:20 seems to indicate. We can be sure, however, that it was not doctrinal division as in Galatia, or moral weakness as in Corinth. It seems rather to have been some form of jealousy fired by the personal ambitions of some church members. To check this lack of concord before it breaks out into open schism, Paul writes the moving appeal for harmony centering about the opening verses of chapter 2.

Notice where he begins. "If there is any encouragement in Christ". He begins with Christ, and bases his whole appeal for unity on the actual union of the believer with the body of Christ. "Union with Christ," Paul is saying, "demands unity in Christian life." Modern appeals to church unity which begin anywhere but with "union in Christ" are rootless and baseless.

And second, "if any incentive of love". The first appeal is objective, our union in Christ; the second is warmly subjective. It is an appeal to that sympathetic love of the brethren which is characteristic of real Christians. Love is the best word to describe the Christian God. He is Love. Love is the best word to describe the Christian religion; it is love of God. And love is the best word to describe the Christian way of life: it is love of our fellowmen.

Unity in the church is built on these two cornerstones: our union with Christ, and our love of the brethren. If either one of these is missing we cannot ~~even~~ say we love God and are not rightly in the church at all. The rest of this first verse only repeats the same lesson in other words. Unity in Christ and love of the brethren, these are the foundations of unity in the church.

But what about doctrine? Isn't that also basic to union? Yes, but do not try to read too much into this passage. Paul is not talking about church re-union, after schism. *He is fore-stalling schism.* He is talking to a single congregation, undivided by heresies; and the basis of unity in such a group is precisely as he describes it: oneness in Christ, and love toward one another. Given these two basias, it is for Christians (as

Phillips translates verse 2) "to live together in harmony (and) live together in love, as though (they) had only one mind and one spirit between (them)".

But that is easier said than done. It is not easy even in a Christian mission station. How are Christians actually to work out such happy harmony? The secret, says Paul in verse 3, is humility.

This is the second step in Paul's appeal. First, be united. Second, if you want to be united, ~~you must~~ be humble. "In humility count others better than yourselves". This is what the church should be like, says Paul, a community where nothing is done in selfishness, or conceit, but where in humility each thinks more of others than he does of himself. "A marvellous community," exclaims one commentator (Lenski, p. 772) "in which no one is looked down upon, but every one looked up to."

Does that describe your community, your station? It ought to. But how often humility, which is the indispensable ingredient in Christian living, becomes the missing ingredient in the way we actually live. "When I look back upon my own religious experience," says Andrew Murray in his little book, Humility (p. 7), "or round upon the Church of Christ in the world, I stand amazed at the thought of how little humility is sought after as the distinguishing feature of discipleship of Jesus... Alas, how much proof there is that humility is not esteemed the cardinal virtue, the only root from which the graces grow, the one indispensable condition of true fellowship with Jesus... Meekness and lowliness of heart are the chief marks by which those who follow the meek and lowly Lamb of God are known."

I wonder how much of ^{our troubles as missionaries} the tension between Church and Mission in Korea] is caused by lack of humility [in the missionaries. (Don't change the subject and start talking about the faults of the Koreans.)] I know we don't intend to be arrogant and proud. Quite the opposite. We're not arrogant and proud. But think of the handicap we work against. I was badly jolted one day when a Korean said to me, "Americans are always proud. Even if they weren't I wouldn't believe it, because if I had all they had, I'd be proud myself." If that is the handicap we work against, how much harder we must work to be humble.

Again easier said than done. We can't just go around muttering fiercely to ourselves, "Be humble. Be humble." It doesn't work. If humility is so necessary, if it really is the secret of unity in the church, then what in the world is the secret of humility, for that is the secret we need.

Do you remember when Paul found himself in just such a cycle of frustration. He described it to the Romans, "I don't understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... I can will what is right, but I cannot do it... Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death."

And remember also the triumphant answer: "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The answer is always Christ. The secret of humility is Christ. Be united. How? Be humble. How? Be in Christ. "Have this mind in you which is also in Christ Jesus."

The usual interpretation of this difficult verse is to take it as an appeal to the example of Jesus Christ. That is the sense of the King James version, and that sense is not entirely foreign to this passage. The example is there. But the example is not enough. And besides, the example of Christ is not an ordinary Pauline pattern of thought. (See M. Hollis, "A Further Note on Philippians 2:5" in Indian Journal of Theology, VII, 4, 1958). "He does not argue that Christians can do something because Jesus has done it, in the sense that what man has done man can do". Paul is more radical and dynamic than that. What Paul says, over and over again, is that Christians can do what was before impossible because they are "in Christ", new men in Christ. ["The humanly impossible (humility, unity) is possible because they are in Christ".]

The RSV translates the verse better, "Have this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus". In other words, let your mutual relationships be governed not by your natural minds--the old nature--but by the new nature, the mind which is yours in Christ.

Then follows the great passage which is the glory of the epistle--the description of the humility which can be ours when we are in Christ. It is poetry, really. The style stands out sharply from the casual manner of the rest of the letter. The first Christian hymn, some call it,--every phrase measured, every word exact and balanced. If you really want to catch the flavor of the original, read Milton, not our prose translation:

"That glorious Form, that Light insufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heavn's high Council-Table
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksom House of mortal Clay."
(--"On the Morning of Christ's Nativity)

Phil. 2:5-8.

These great verses form one of the most profound Christological passages in the whole Bible, but they are no academic text in theology; Paul uses them not to teach theology primarily, but to teach a very practical truth about Christian living in a very practical situation. It is a very lofty passage used to teach a very lowly truth, humility. Theology may be the queen of the sciences; more important, it is the handmaid of Christian living.

But why so powerful a passage to teach so meek a little virtue? It sweeps back the curtain of the ages to reveal the pre-existent Christ. It focusses at the hinge of history on the incarnate Christ. It moves on in majesty to the end of time with the exalted Christ. Why all this to teach humility?

Paul begins with the pre-existent Christ, I think, to give ethical meaning to the humiliation. It is precisely because Christ was God that his becoming a servant had meaning. There is no humility in a servant being a servant. And even less in a man becoming God, as some of the modern Adoptionist heresies would have it.

How can the Unitarians say that the Bible does not teach the deity of

Christ. Here is our earliest glimpse of him, back before the mountains were brought forth or ever the earth and the world began, and He is God, very God of very God. It is only the English which is ambiguous, with its "existing in the form of God". The Greeks, analytical as always, had two separate words for "form". One refers to outer shape, and changes "as when a cloud takes the form of a mountain" (Interpreters Bible). That is not the one used here. Paul uses the other (morphe), the kind of form that expresses what the object really is. If Christ has the form of God in this sense, ~~that~~ God is what he really is. Phillips translates it, "He who had always been God by nature..."

He who had always been God...became man. The Lord of Glory "took on him the form of a servant." Once again the word "form". It means he really was a servant, not just masquerading as one, as that "reverse" unitarianism of the Coptic church would have us believe. The Copts virtually deny the real humanity of Christ. Isolated, introverted, superstitious and selfish, they are an object lesson to the church on what will happen to it if it forgets that God became a servant. It simply ceases to be relevant. The pre-existence of Christ makes the humiliation ethical; the incarnation makes it relevant. *(just how relevant we refer to as de... you in a study time) He became a servant that*

In 1956 a committee of the World Alliance of Presbyterian Churches met ~~behind the curtain~~, in Prague, trying to choose a theme for its 18th General Council which will meet next month in Brazil. They were looking for a theme that would be equally vital for all the 45,000,000 Presbyterian and Reformed Christians of the world, the second largest confessional family of churches in Protestantism. They were looking for a theme that would be as relevant to the brethren in Prague behind the curtain as to those in Brazil, under the shadow of Rome, or to us right here in Korea. ~~It was this~~ passage that they finally ^{chose} fitted the specifications. ^{it} They linked it with Isaiah 53, and John 13, and chose as the theme for the Quadrennium, "The Servant Lord and His Servant People". *because -- you're right!*

It is relevant in Prague, I know, for ~~it spoke to us in power back in Red China~~. This is ~~the~~ one point at which the still small voice of God outshouts even the communists and their propaganda.

When Whittaker Chambers was asked by one of the jurors at the Hiss trial "What does it mean to be a communist?", this was part of his answer: "It means to be like Djerjinsky.." Who was Djerjinsky. He is a communist hero, a young man in a Tsarist prison in Warsaw who insisted on being given the dirty job of cleaning the latrines. "Why", asked the warden, surprised. "Because," he said, "it is the duty of the most developed member of any community to take upon himself the lowliest tasks." *[The communist must be ready to clean the latrines.] But that's not communism.*

As I read that, my mind ^{went} ~~reluctantly snapped~~ back to the 13th chapter of John with its record of a time when Jesus was trying to teach his disciples what it really means to be a Christian. There was not much time. It was near the end. You remember what he did. He asked for a basin, and water, and took over for himself the lowliest task at hand. He washed the disciple's feet.

We don't hear very much about foot-washing any more in the Christian

(church. Why? Have we abandoned the "Servant" theme to the communists? They think so.) I remember when the communists rolled over us in Peking. Knowing what propaganda use they made of our "capitalistic luxuries", one of our friends, Hal Leiper, did everything he could to simplify his living standards. He got rid of his furniture, his rugs; ~~his good clothes~~ he ate the simplest of food, wore the simplest of clothes--and waited proudly to make his point. But he still shakes his head wryly at the memory of the first communist soldier who came in. "An imperialist?" said Hal. "No. Look." And he swept his hand around at the bare house. "We are here to serve you, not to become rich. We are servants." And the little soldier smiled and looked at his shoes. That's all; just looked at his shoes. And Hal looked down finally, too, and his heart sank. His were leather; the soldier was wearing frayed old canvas tennis shoes.

It is not the things you give up that count for humility. Humility is in the heart. That is what counts. Theologians have spent too much time arguing about the "kenosis" in these verses, about just what it was that Christ emptied himself of, here where it says, "He emptied himself" (vs. 7). Was it his glory that he laid aside, or his omnipotence, his divine attributes, or his relative attributes? Paul brushes all such speculation aside. "He emptied himself" is what the passage says. He poured himself out in utter self-sacrifice for us, as water is poured from a vase. *This is the mind that must be in us as we do this*

And now in verse 8, the climax: ~~of the humility of the Servant Lord, the depth of humiliation.~~ He became "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross". The emptying is complete: he poured out his soul unto death. The obedience of course is to God, not to death, as the English might imply, "obedient unto death". "Christ did not obey death; he abolished it." (Moule, see II Tim. 1:10).

"The death of the cross". I wonder if there is not a peculiar poignancy to the phrase as used in this epistle. Paul was a Roman. The Philippians to whom he was writing were Romans too, for Philippi was a colony, and enjoyed all the rights of the jus Italicum. Neither Paul nor the Philippians could ever be sentenced to crucifixion. It was too humiliating a death for a Roman. So much greater the impact, then, of the example of the Servant Lord. What they could never be asked to suffer for Him, He suffered for them. And what does He ask in return? Humility. It is as important as that.

~~All this to teach humility.~~ Yes, and more. When we turn to chapter 3, with its three paragraphs, each paragraph a warning: the first (vs. 2-11) a warning against legalism; the second (vs. 12-16) a warning against perfectionism; the third (vs. 17-21) a warning against licentiousness--even here the underlying lesson is humility.

Each of these Every warning is basically a warning against pride. *Legalism* Legalism? It is nothing but pride, pride in the law and pride in the flesh, says Paul. "Glory in Christ and put no confidence in the flesh." "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." That is humility.

Perfectionism? It is nothing but pride in one's self, one's own accomplishments. I am not perfect, says Paul. "I count not myself to have apprehended (here I prefer the KJV) but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward

the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And that, too, is humility.

Licentiousness? ~~There can be pride even in grace.~~ "Let us sin that grace may abound", some were saying in Rome. That is not the pride of grace, says Paul, that is the pride of shame. ~~"But glory in their shame"~~ "Their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame." (3:19) "But our commonwealth is in heaven..." We are subject of him who "subjects all things to himself." Servants of the Servant Lord. That is what it means to be humble.

The Servant Lord

Relevant to R.I.E.

It can be as important in mission as well - in the witness

" Pageant in Bern in days when Swiss were leading on
against the Reformation. 2 peasants watch a procession: "a
man poorly clad riding on a donkey". Here is the dialogue —
1st peasant: Who is that poor fellow on the donkey. He wears a
plain gray cloak and on his head he has a wreath of thorns.
The poor, the lame, and the blind fellow here. He turns his way.
For all he has a word of cheer and he rides so humbly on his
beast. Tell me who he is for Jesus' sake.

2nd peasant: Why, that's just who he is, gentle, meek, kind, comforting
and full of cheer. He is the Saviour of the world our Lord Jesus
Christ.

The procession passes and is followed by another of horsemen and
footmen, with blowing of trumpets and beating of drums

" 1st peasant. Who is the mighty emperor followed by so many soldiers.
Were it not for the priests I'd say they were Turks with their elegant
clothes.... The leader has a 3-layer crown of gold. He rides on
a horse and is warlike and wild. Can you tell me who he is?

2nd peasant. Why yes he is the representative on earth of the
man on the donkey." (Barton, Ch. 1 on Luther, p. 145)

Berne got the point, and voted for the Reformation. May
we so depict ourselves as ~~representatives~~ ^{representatives} of the man on the donkey
that ~~the~~ ^{Korea} will get the point too.

Presbyterian Mission, Andong
4FO 18, San Francisco, Cal.
(for letters only)
December, 1958

Dear Friends:

Thank you for all the Christmas cards and letters that have been pouring in on us. In return, we would like to tell you a Christmas story from Korea.

It is about a Christmas Eve in Death Row, and a murderer's last minute conversion. If that sounds overly melodramatic to you, we can only say in defense that melodrama is the ordinary stuff of life out here, and that what may be too vivid for you is only normal in Korea. I remember, for example, a chance acquaintance on the train telling me in a matter-of-fact way how he had seized his own brother captive in a file of surrendering communist soldiers. Torn apart by the 38 parallel; pushed into opposite sides of the war; they ended up facing each other at gunpoint. (If I say it in a B-movie I'd laugh skeptically; out here it really happens.)

But to get back to Death Row and the murderer. It makes a sequel to a sketch about our fellow-missionary, Otto DeCamp, which I did for the Princeton Spire a while ago. Otto was arrested back in 1941 for resisting the Japanese when they tried to force Shinto worship on Korean Christians. He was torn from his bride of two months, held incommunicado for six weeks and sentenced to ten months at hard labor. The sentence was finally suspended, but not until after a three-month ordeal of filth and strain in Seoul's notorious West Gate prison had left its mark on him, and not until its bleak, black cells and dirty, flea-bitten, hollow-eyed prisoners were indelibly etched on his mind. Some day, he vowed, he would do something for them.

The sequel begins fifteen years or so later when another prisoner is thrown into that same squalid jail. This one, however, deserves it; he is a murderer. Discharged from the Korean Navy and brutal series of small crimes. His slow mind burned with a particular antipathy to Christians for no other reason, it seems, than that he was once awakened at dawn by church bells calling the faithful to daybreak prayers and then could not go back to sleep.

There was one influence that might have redeemed him. He fell in love with a pretty Sunday School teacher, but when she excused herself one evening from a date in order to prepare for a Christmas program, he casually and cruelly shrugged her out of his life. After that he was lost. When at last he was picked up by the police for murder and condemned to death he did not even bother to appeal the sentence, and on Christmas Eve was waiting sullenly in his cell for the day of execution -- when suddenly he heard the angels sing!

It was no angel, of course; it was only a radio. But it was to have as startling an effect on Kim's life as any angel song. By this time, you see, Otto DeCamp had fulfilled his vow. He had returned to Korea after the war with the major assignment of building and directing hKAY, Korea's first Christian radio station. To his office one day about two years ago came an official from the West Gate prison with a request. Could hKAY donate a radio to the prison to bring a little music into the dreary lives of the prisoners?

Heinz, whose dying wife needs medicine, steal it? When high school students study ethics at all, it is usually in the form of pondering such dilemmas or in the form of debates on social issues: abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and the like. Directive moral education is out of favor. Storytelling is out of fashion.

Who is the hero?

Let's consider just how the current fashion in dilemmas differs from the older approach to moral education, which often used tales and parables to instill moral principles. Novelist Saul Bellow, for example, asserts that the survival of Jewish culture would be inconceivable without the stories that

an old woman. He left her the wood, which was enough for the week. The rabbi then quietly returned to his own house.

The story concludes:

The newcomer stayed on in the village and became a disciple of the rabbi. And whenever he hears one of his fellow villagers say, "On Friday morning our rabbi ascends all the way to heaven," the newcomer quietly adds, "If not higher."

In a moral dilemma such as Kohlberg's Heinz stealing the drug, or the lifeboat case, there are no obvious heroes or villains. Not only do the characters lack moral personality, but they exist in a vacuum outside of traditions and social arrangements that shape

contagious. Even the skeptic gets the point.

Stories and parables are not always appropriate for high-school or college ethics courses, but the literary classics certainly are. To understand *King Lear*, *Oliver Twist*, or *Huckleberry Finn* requires that the reader have some understanding of (and sympathy with) what the author is saying about the moral ties that bind the characters and that hold in place the social fabric in which they play their roles. Literary figures can thus provide students with the moral paradigms that Aristotle thought were essential to moral education.

Hungry for moral sustenance

I am not suggesting that moral puzzles and dilemmas have no place in the ethics curriculum. To teach something about the logic of moral discourse and the practice of moral reasoning in resolving conflicts of principles is clearly important. But dilemmas are not the place to *start*, and, taken by themselves, provide little or no moral sustenance. Moreover, an exclusive diet of dilemma ethics tends to give the student the impression that ethical thinking is a lawyer's game.

So where *do* we start? What I am recommending is not new. It has worked before and is simple:

1. Schools should have behavior codes that emphasize civility, kindness, self-discipline, and honesty.
2. Teachers should not be accused of brainwashing children when they insist on basic decency, honesty, and fairness.
3. Children should be told stories that reinforce goodness. In high school and college, students should be reading, studying, and discussing the moral classics.

I am suggesting that teachers must help children become acquainted with their moral heritage in literature, religion, and philosophy. I believe that virtue can be taught and that effective moral education appeals to the emotions as well as to the mind. The best moral teaching inspires students by making them keenly aware that their own character is at stake. □

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give point and meaning to the Jewish moral tradition. One such story, included in a collection of traditional Jewish tales that Bellow edited, is called "If Not Higher." I sketch it here to contrast the story approach with the dilemma approach.

There was once a rabbi in a small Jewish village in Russia who vanished every Friday for several hours. The villagers boasted that during these hours their rabbi ascended to heaven to talk with God. A skeptical newcomer arrived in town, determined to discover where the rabbi really was.

One Friday morning the newcomer hid near the rabbi's house, watched him rise, say his prayers and put on the clothes of a peasant. He saw him take an ax and go into the forest, chop down a tree, and gather a large bundle of wood.

The rabbi proceeded to a shack in the poorest section of the village in which lived

their conduct in the problematic situations confronting them. In a dilemma, there is no obvious right and wrong, no clear vice and virtue. It may engage the students' minds, but it only marginally engages their emotions and moral sensibilities. The issues are finely balanced, listeners are on their own, and they individually decide for themselves. As one critic of dilemma ethics has observed, one cannot imagine parents passing down to their children the tale of Heinz and the stolen drug. By contrast, in the story of the rabbi and the skeptical outsider, it is not up to the listener to decide whether or not the rabbi did the right thing. The moral message is clear: "Here is a good man—merciful, compassionate, and actively helping someone weak and vulnerable. Be like that person." The message is

Letter from a Roman

Words can become "tired and stale," writes novelist Frederick Buechner. After thousands of years, even the words of Scripture "have become almost too familiar to hear anymore." That is why we should thank the Lord for the ministry Eugene Peterson has performed in *The Message* (NavPress).

The pastor-professor, who recently arrived at Vancouver's Regent College, helps us overcome our overfamiliarity by dressing the New Testament in earthy, contemporary language (which is how the original was clothed, he would add). In the tradition of Ken Taylor's *The Living Bible* and J. B. Phillips's *The New Testament in Modern English*, Peterson has given the church an opportunity to read the Bible afresh.

Below is the entire text of Paul's letter to the Philippians. We suspected CT readers would rather taste Peterson's paraphrase than read a review of it. In addition, associate editor Timothy Jones flew to Peterson's Montana summer home to ask him how he approached this momentous task. See "Getting God's Words to Market."

PAUL AND TIMOTHY, BOTH OF US committed servants of Christ Jesus, write this letter to all the Christians in Philippi, pastors and ministers included. We greet you with the grace and peace that comes from God our Father and our Master, Jesus Christ.

Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

It's not at all fanciful for me to think this way about you. My prayers and hopes have deep roots in reality. You have, after all, stuck with me all the way from the time I was thrown in jail, put on trial, and came out of it in one piece. All along you have experienced with me the most generous help from God. He knows how much I love and miss you these days. Sometimes I think I feel as strongly about you as Christ does!

So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush. Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.

I want to report to you, friends, that my imprisonment here has had the opposite of its intended effect. Instead of being squelched, the Message has actually prospered. All the soldiers here, and everyone else too, found out that I'm in jail because of this Messiah. That piqued their curiosity, and now they've learned all about him. Not only that, but most of the Christians here have become far more sure of themselves in the faith than ever, speaking out fearlessly about God, about the Messiah.

It's true that some here preach Christ because with me out of the way, they think they'll step right into the spotlight. But the others do it with the best heart in the world. One group is motivated by pure love, knowing that I am here defending the Message, wanting to help. The others, now that I'm out of the picture, are merely greedy, hoping to get something out of it for themselves. Their motives are bad. They see me as their competition, and so the worse it goes for me, the better—they think—for them.

So how am I to respond? I've decided that I really don't

Jail

*Words of liberation from
a prisoner of conscience.
A new paraphrase of
Philippians by
Eugene Peterson.*

care about their motives, whether mixed, bad, or indifferent. Every time one of them opens his mouth, Christ is proclaimed, so I just cheer them on!

And I'm going to keep that celebration going because I know how it's going to turn out. Through your faithful prayers and the generous response of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, everything he wants to do in and through me will be done. I can hardly wait to continue on my course. I don't expect to be embarrassed in the least. On the contrary, everything happening to me in this jail only serves to make Christ more accurately known, regardless of whether I live or die. They didn't shut me up; they gave me a pulpit! Alive, I'm Christ's messenger; dead, I'm his bounty. Life versus even more life! I can't lose.

As long as I'm alive in this body, there is good work for me to do. If I had to choose right now, I hardly know which I'd choose. Hard choice! The desire to break camp here and be with Christ is powerful. Some days I can think of nothing better. But most days, because of what you are going through, I am sure that it's better for me to stick it out here. So I plan to be around awhile, companion to you as your growth and joy in this life of trusting God continues. You can start looking forward to a great reunion when I come visit you again. We'll be praising Christ, enjoying each other.

Meanwhile, live in such a way that you are a credit to the Message of Christ. Let nothing in your conduct hang on whether I come or not. Your conduct must be the same whether I show up to see things for myself or hear of it from a distance.

WILLIAM FAVATA



Letter from a Roman Jail

Stand united, singular in vision, contending for people's trust in the Message, the good news, not flinching or dodging in the slightest before the opposition. Your courage and unity will show them what they're up against: defeat for them, victory for you—and both because of God. There's far more to this life than trusting in Christ. There's also suffering for him. And the suffering is as much a gift as the trusting. You're involved in the same kind of struggle you saw me go through, on which you are now getting an updated report in this letter.

If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you *care*—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became *human!* Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that: a crucifixion.

Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY

WHAT I'M GETTING AT, FRIENDS, is that you should simply keep on doing what you've done from the beginning. When I was living among you, you lived in responsive obedience. Now that I'm separated from you, keep it up. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God. That energy is *God's* energy, an energy deep within you, God himself willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure.

Do everything readily and cheerfully—no bickering, no second-guessing allowed! Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in this squalid and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. Carry the light-giving Message into the night so I'll have good cause to be proud of you on the day that Christ returns. You'll be living proof that I didn't go to all this work for nothing.

Even if I am executed here and now, I'll rejoice in being an element in the offering of your faith that you make on Christ's altar, a part of your rejoicing. But turnabout's fair play—you must join me in *my* rejoicing. Whatever you do, don't feel sorry for me.

I plan (according to Jesus' plan) to send Timothy to you very soon so he can bring back all the news of you he can gather. Oh, how that will do my heart good! I have no one quite like Timothy. He is loyal, and genuinely concerned for you. Most people around here are looking out for themselves, with little concern for the things of Jesus. But you know yourselves that Timothy's the real thing. He's been a devoted son to me as together we've delivered the Message. As soon as I see how things are going to fall out for me here, I plan to send him off. And then I'm hoping and praying to be right on his heels.

But for right now, I'm dispatching Epaphroditus, my good friend and companion in my work. You sent him to help me out; now I'm sending him to help you out. He has been wanting in the worst way to get back with you. Especially since recovering from the illness you heard about, he's been wanting to get back and reassure you that he is just fine. He nearly died, as you know, but God had mercy on him. And not only on him—he had mercy on me, too. His death would have been one huge grief piled on top of all the others.

So you can see why I'm so delighted to send him on to you. When you see him again, hale and hearty, how you'll rejoice and how relieved I'll be. Give him a grand welcome, a joyful embrace! People like him deserve the best you can give. Remember the ministry to me that you started but weren't able to complete? Well, in the process of finishing up that work, he put his life on the line and nearly died doing it.

And that's about it, friends. Be glad in God!

I don't mind repeating what I have written in earlier letters, and I hope you don't mind hearing it again. Better safe than sorry—so here goes.

Steer clear of the barking dogs, those religious busybodies, all bark and no bite. All they're interested in is appearances—knife-happy circumcisers, I call them. The *real* believers are the ones the Spirit of God leads to work away at this ministry, filling the air with Christ's praise as we do it. We couldn't carry this off by our own efforts, and we know it—even though we can list what many might think are impressive credentials. You know my pedigree: a legitimate birth, circumcised on the eighth day; an Israelite from the elite tribe of Benjamin; a strict and devout adherent to God's law; a fiery defender of the purity of my religion, even to the point of persecuting Christians; a meticulous observer of everything set down in God's law Book.

The very credentials these people are waving around as something special, I'm tearing up and throwing out with the trash—along with everything else I used to take credit for. And why? Because of Christ. Yes, all the things I once thought were so important are gone from my life. Compared to the high privilege of knowing Christ Jesus as my Master, first-hand, everything I once thought I had going for me is insignificant—dog dung. I've dumped it all in the trash so that I could embrace Christ and be embraced by him. I didn't want some petty, inferior brand of righteousness that comes from keeping a list of rules when I could get the robust kind that comes from trusting Christ—*God's* righteousness.

I gave up all that inferior stuff so I could know Christ personally, experience his resurrection power, be a partner in his suffering, and go all the way with him to death itself. If there was any way to get in on the resurrection from the dead, I wanted to do it.

Getting God's Words to Market

With Bible versions proliferating, why did you give us another?

That was *my* question as well, at first. But language changes fast. The church needs to keep Scripture alive in the language of the people.

When culture was pretty stable, a Bible translation could last a couple of centuries. Not anymore. And while you cannot have an authorized Bible every ten years—it requires too much time and scholarship—you *can* have a rendering like *The Message* every so often.

Whom is *The Message* for?

People like Tom, the trucker and furniture mover who transported our belongings across the country. He left parochial school in the eighth grade and hasn't been back to church since. But his ears pricked up when he heard about this. I wrote for people like him who don't think they can understand the Bible or "churchy" language.

I also hope it helps Christians who are tired of the words, of the biblical phrases. They're not bored when they talk to their friends and gossip over the back fence. I tried to use the same vernacular. I hope they'll pick this up and be surprised.

Some have suggested that *The Message* uses too much vernacular.

I respond by asking, How did this material sound when it was first written? It was written in street language. Some of it was offensive to the cultured people of the first century. They didn't take it seriously because it was not literary, not cultured. But it spoke. That's the dynamic I've tried to capture.

How is your work similar to J. B. Phillips's *New Testament in Modern English*?

When I was young, Phillips was a great gift to me. But I haven't read Phillips for years. I mostly read the Bible from my Greek Testament and

Hebrew Bible. But I'm pleased to be compared to Phillips. He is the translator/paraphraser I feel most akin to.

When people ask me, What qualifications do you have to do this? I answer, I was a pastor for 35 years. I think that among modern paraphrasers, Phillips has been the only other pastor.

How is *The Message* different from other paraphrases?

While we are calling what I've done a paraphrase, I've also often had the feel-

ence. Jesus was a master at doing this. His listeners didn't have to read a commentary to figure out what he was saying.

One critic wrote that some of your renderings of "difficult" verses represent personal interpretation, whereas strict translations generally attempt to retain a passage's ambiguity. How do you respond?

All translation is interpretation. As I worked, I was struck anew by how ambiguous language is. It's hard to say a sentence and have somebody understand it. And when you jump 20 centuries and move from a different language, it's really tough. It's amazing how competent scholars who know biblical Greek inside and out come up with radically different readings of the same sentence. Those working on an authorized version will appropriately exercise more caution, translating in a way that preserves the ambiguity of a given text.

But I believe there was no ambiguity originally. Paul was writing as straight and clearly as he could. Jesus spoke that way. So I felt liberty to be as clear as I could within the bounds of evangelical theology. I also had five scholars read this whose job was to make sure I didn't violate doctrine in any way.

How did your interest in poetry help your translating?

When you love words, you want them to sound fresh. When a word becomes a cliché, it's not working anymore; so you tend not to use it.

Philosopher Martin Heidegger said that poets are the shepherds of words. As a shepherd, you're not just trying to get the sheep to the market and get the best price for them. You're taking care of them along the way.

I'm trying to reach disaffected outsiders and bored insiders. I hope *The Message* becomes a means by which a lot of people who've never read the Bible read it. And the means by which many who've stopped reading will start again. □

Interview by Timothy Jones.



Eugene Peterson

ing that it is true translation. I sometimes made wild jumps in terms of word order or metaphor, but I was still trying to work out of the original setting and speech.

The Word "dwelt among us" in John 1 became "moved into the neighborhood." Why did you overhaul such metaphors?

"Dwelt among us" was likely something people said in the first century. But I've never heard anybody say that except when they're quoting the Bible. "Moved into the neighborhood" is something we would say. I wanted to use a phrase that came out of people's experi-

You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush.

FOCUSED ON THE GOAL

I'M NOT SAYING THAT I HAVE THIS ALL together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.

So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

Stick with me, friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal. There are many out there taking other paths, choosing other goals, and trying to get you to go along with them. I've warned you of them many times; sadly, I'm having to do it again. All they want is easy street. They hate Christ's Cross. But easy street is a dead-end street. Those who live there make their bellies their gods; belches are their praise; all they can think of is their appetites.

But there's far more to life for us. We're citizens of high heaven! We're waiting the arrival of the Savior, the Master, Jesus Christ, who will transform our earthly bodies into glorious bodies like his own. He'll make us beautiful and whole with the same powerful skill by which he is putting everything as it should be, under and around him.

My dear, dear friends! I love you so much. I do want the very best for you. You make me feel such joy, fill me with such pride. Don't waver. Stay on track, steady in God.

I urge Euodia and Syntyche to iron out their differences and make up. God doesn't want his children holding grudges.

And, oh, yes, Syzygus, since you're right there to help them work things out, do your best with them. These women worked for the Message hand in hand with Clement and me, and with the other veterans—worked as hard as any of us. Remember, their names are also in the book of life.

Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, *revel* in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when

Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

CONTENT WHATEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCES

I'M GLAD IN GOD, FAR HAPPIER THAN you would ever guess—happy that you're again showing such strong concern for me. Not that you ever quit praying and thinking about me. You just had no chance to show it. Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am. I don't mean that your help didn't mean a lot to me—it did. It was a beautiful thing that you came alongside me in my troubles.

You Philippians well know, and you can be sure I'll never forget it, that when I first left Macedonia province, venturing out with the Message, not one church helped out in the give-and-take of this work except you. You were the only one. Even while I was in Thessalonica, you helped out—and not only once, but twice. Not that I'm looking for handouts, but I do want you to experience the blessing that issues from generosity.

And now I have it all—and keep getting more! The gifts you sent with Epaphroditus were more than enough, like a sweet-smelling sacrifice roasting on the altar, filling the air with fragrance, pleasing God no end. You can be sure that God will take care of everything you need, his generosity exceeding even yours in the glory that pours from Jesus. Our God and Father abounds in glory that just pours out into eternity. Yes.

Give our regards to every Christian you meet. Our friends here say hello. All the Christians here, especially the believers who work in the palace of Caesar, want to be remembered to you.

Receive and experience the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, deep, deep within yourselves. □